GMA reports capture of country's biggest drug lord

Story on PAGE A2

It's like the Marcos KBL again, says Roco

PARA TAYONG
NASA PANAHON
NI MAKOY!

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

PRESIDENTIAL candidate Raul Roco is seeing the resurrection of the monolithic Kilusang Bagong Lipunan of the Marcos era.

IT'S LIKE/ A6

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WHAT'S INSIDE

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Loren charms Erap boys

Lakas spokesman vents ire on GMA

By Cynthia D. Balana

BY his own admission "breathing fire," Heherson Alvarez yesterday assailed President Macapagal-Arroyo for her supposed pragmatism and "wishy-washy" stance.

"She's showing lack of vision," the disgruntled spokesperson of the ruling Lakas-CMD told the INQUIRER. "There's too much pragmatism that threatens the development of the party. *Marami siyang maling desisyon* (She has made many wrong decisions)."

Alvarez, who is hurting for being excluded from the Lakas senatorial lineup, has formally filed his senatorial candidacy as an independent. His certificate of candidacy was filed by his son Hexilon at 7 p.m. Monday, making him the 69th senatorial candidate at the time.

Alvarez also said Ms Macapagal was "full of silence" on many historic issues and had chosen to play politics.

"Di niya malaman kung saan siya pupuwesto (She doesn't know where to situate herself)," he said, adding that in contrast, he was "like a shining star during those crucial moments."

"I'm raising this question because I'm in pain. I'm crying and bleeding in my heart," he said.

According to a member of ousted President Joseph Estrada's camp, Alvarez sent emissaries to the Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino headquarters to negotiate his inclusion in the senatorial lineup of the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino hours be-

LAKAS/ A15

DID she say sorry? Sen. Loren Legarda and Estrada loyalist leader Arnold Orbina laugh during a meeting at the Manila Polo Club in Makati City on Tuesday. The pro-Estrada group had earlier demanded a public apology from the vice presidential candidate. Behind them is lawyer Ed Escueta. BOY CABRIDO

Differences resolved over club sandwiches

By Arlyn dela Cruz
Contributor
and Christine O. Avendaño

SHE DID not utter the word "sorry," but they still kissed and made up.

Sen. Loren Legarda, the opposition coalition's candidate for vice president, yesterday met for almost two hours with group leaders identified with deposed President Joseph Estrada.

After the meeting at the Manila Polo Club in Makati City, Legarda and the People's Alliance for Truth and Justice headed by convenor Arnold Obina agreed to iron out their differences and work together for the Fernando Poe Jr.-Loren Legarda ticket.

Pro-Estrada supporters had loudly protested Poe's choice of Legarda as running mate, and demanded an apology from her for her role in Estrada's impeachment trial.

But the dialogue, part of what Legarda later called "a heart-to-heart talk," worked to appease Estrada's supporters.

At a news conference held at the residence of a supporter in Dasmariñas Village, Makati City, Horacio "Boy" Morales announced that Estrada's party, the Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino, was supporting both Poe and Legarda.

"The PMP wants a change of administration and to go about it, we need strong opposition candidates and we support the Fernando Poe-Legarda tandem," Morales told reporters in Filipino, with Legarda by his side.

At the Manila Polo meeting, Obina and his fellow leaders

LOREN/ A16

Foreign funds power surge of local stocks

LOCAL stocks surged by more than 3 percent for a second day to close at a fresh 33-month high on Tuesday, powered by heavy foreign buying in Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Globe Telecom Inc. and other key blue chips.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index jumped 45.40 points, or 3.1 percent, to 1,532.74, its highest since closing at 1,567.53 on March 12, 2001. The main index surged 44.97 points, or 3.1 percent, to 1,487.34 on Monday, the first trading day of 2004.

The inflow of foreign funds was apparent in Tuesday's turnover. Transaction volume rose to 674.9 million shares valued at P1.57 billion from Monday's 195.9 million shares valued at P774.2 million.

The broader All Shares Index likewise advanced, rising 15.75 points to 908.07 after climbing 17.54 points on Monday. Gainers beat losers 55 to 13, with 36 stocks unchanged.

"Foreign funds are coming in due to the generally strong sentiment for the region. There is strong growth expectations for Asia," Chelsea Dipasupil, research head at RCBC Securities, told Dow Jones Newswires. "We're also seeing positive political developments in the domestic front.

Traders said investors also considered as a welcome development the deepening rift within

FOREIGN/ A7

MOURNING IN ZAMBOANGA. President Macapagal prays before the remains of Zamboanga City Mayor Maria Clara Lobregat. Beside her is the mayor's son, Rep. Celso Lobregat. PCPO-MALACAÑANG

Comelec makes split in LDP party official

By Martin P. Marfil, Michael Lim Ubac and Christine O. Avendaño

THE OPPOSITION Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino was effectively split into two yesterday, after the Commission on Elections decided to recognize its two competing nominating authorities.

The result, as explained by Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos: Sen. Panfilo Lacson, nominated by party secretary general Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino, and movie actor Fernando Poe Jr., who will likely be nominated by party chair Sen. Edgardo Angara, will both be considered "official candidates" for president.

"In short both of them, referring to Senator Lacson and Mr. Fernando Poe Jr. will be considered official candidates of the party. However, their inspectors would be on odd and even designations," Abalos said.

Poe's Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino immediately accused Malacañang of being behind the unusual decision.

"It's benefiting neither of the two LDP factions. Like what (LDP spokesperson) Mike Romero has said, we see the hand of Malacañang here," said KNP spokesperson Rod Reyes.

Reyes emphasized that the ruling was far from being a Solomonic decision.

"It's really part of the demoli-

COMELEC/ A16

BANGAYAN: American dream ends in Baghdad. AP

RP burial for Fil-Am killed in Iraq

JAY, Vermont—A Vermont couple's son who was killed while fighting in Iraq will be buried with military honors in the Philippines where he was born.

Army Specialist Solomon Bangayan, 24, was killed in Baghdad on Friday when Iraqi fighters used an explosive device, a rocket-propelled grenade and firearms to attack the convoy he was in, according to the Defense Department.

The attack also killed Spc. Marc S. Seiden, 26, of Brigantine, New Jersey. Both soldiers served in the 82nd Battalion,

RP BURIAL/ A6

SARS QUARANTINE

38 people in Laguna ordered to stay home

By Romulo O. Ponte and Blanche S. Rivera

THIRTY-EIGHT people have been ordered to stay at home after they had contact with a 42-year-old woman suspected of contracting the flu-like Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. Local authorities have also closed an elementary school in her village in Luisiana town in Laguna.

The woman, who returned to the country on Dec. 20 from Hong Kong where she worked as a maid, is in isolation along with her husband.

But the World Health Organization (WHO) said yesterday there was a remote chance that the woman, identified only as M.D., actually had the disease, as government officials said she seemed to be recovering.

"It could be a very remote possibility that it is a SARS case," Jean-Marc Olive, the WHO representative in the Philippines, told reporters. "Personally, I don't think so."

Olive said the only reason to suspect the woman might have SARS was that she traveled from "a possible area where SARS could re-emerge." He urged the people not to "traumatize the situation."

The scare in the country came after a new case of the disease was confirmed Monday in China's Guangdong province, where the illness first emerged early last year before going on to kill 800 people in Hong Kong, China and other areas.

Authorities will have to wait until Thursday for tests to confirm whether the woman has SARS, but Health Secretary

38 PEOPLE/ A15

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Second FrontPage

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Bicol Region, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/01/07/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

RP's biggest drug lord falls

By Christian V. Esguerra

FINALLY, a big fish—and the biggest catch at that.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday announced the arrest after Christmas of James Go Ong, also known as William Gan, whom she described as the "biggest drug lord in the Philippines."

In a teleconference at Camp Crame, the President said: "Today is an important day, a special triumph for governance. We've been hunting the masterminds (of drug operations) and today we have the biggest of them all."

Gan's syndicate alone accounts for 25 percent of the total supply of shabu in the country, Deputy Director General Edgar Aglipay, head of the police special task force on illegal drugs, told reporters.

Aglipay said the 34-year-old Chinese national owned the shabu factories that the task force raided in Barangay Mapulang Lupa in Valenzuela on Nov. 11 and in Santolan, Pasig, last Dec. 4.

Together, Aglipay added, the two factories turned out at least 1,000 kilos of high-grade shabu weekly. This translated to a whopping P120 billion worth of the illegal substance in a year supplied to users in Visayas and Mindanao, he said.

Gan was also allegedly behind the shipment of a ton of ephedrine, a vital ingredient of shabu, intercepted at the Manila International Container Port last Nov. 27. Seven of Gan's men, all Chinese nationals, were arrested in the same month.

Aglipay's task force and the Phillippine Drug Enforcement Agency got their break against Gan with the arrest last month of Robert Yu, who identified the alleged drug lord as the supplier of the 10-kilo shabu he was caught with.

Acting on Yu's tip, the task force, backed by Bureau of Immigration operatives, nabbed Gan and his 33-year-old live-in partner, Jia Shuxin, on Dec. 26 in front of the San Lorenzo Ruiz church in Binondo, Manila at around 8:30 p.m.

The couple could not show any document to prove the legitimacy of their stay in the country.

Aglipay said the hearing on Gan's case would begin Jan. 27. He said he would ask the court on that day to order the destruction of 128 kilos of shabu and 1,000 kilos of ephedrine seized from the suspect's two factories.

Since the start of a renewed campaign against the drug menace last June, the President said, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency had dismantled 16 laboratories and confiscated around P13 billion worth of shabu.

As a result of the haul, Ms Macapagal said, the street value of shabu had doubled, leading users to complain.

"This is what we call effective supply reduction," she said.

Official statistics show that the country is now a major transshipment point for drugs in the region. Since 2001, the government has made more than 16,000 drug-related arrests and filed criminal charges against some 10,000 suspects. *With an AFP report*

GMA defends senatorial slate

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo and her campaign officials yesterday defended the administration senatorial slate which ruling party mates and allies have denounced for including politicians closely identified with jailed ex-President Estrada.

Campaign spokesperson Mike Defensor, one of the leaders of the House impeachment of Estrada, said the presence in the ticket of Estrada allies Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Sen. John Osmeña and Orly Mercado proved Ms Macapagal's sincerity in pushing reconciliation and unity.

"What is clear to us is that we are not just paying lip service to reconciliation and unity. This is not just propaganda, even now in the campaign we are doing it already," Defensor said.

Defensor also said that the administration K4 coalition was in no hurry to name its 12th senatorial candidate as it had until Jan. 15 to make a substitution.

He denied the 12th slot was being reserved for Santiago who is still deciding whether to run with the administration or the opposition coalition supported by Estrada.

But Defensor implied that Lakas-CMD spokesperson Heherson Alvarez may not expect to be chosen to fill the 12th slot temporarily held by a certain "Atty. Kalaw."

"The 12th slot is not reserved for any particular person, we're still discussing it and we're also still awaiting the decision of some people concerned. We hope within the week we will be able to finalize it," he said.

Alvarez, who was dropped from the slate, had denounced the reported inclusion of Santiago in the ticket as she was the one who allegedly exhorted Estrada supporters to "attack Malacañang" during the bloody siege of the Palace in May 2001.

The President herself answered Alvarez's criticism in a statement.

"I chose the entire slate of K4 after a series of consultations with well-meaning and patriotic leaders of various persuasions and walks of life. It is a slate that is fully united behind the fight for change," she said.

Erap-Miriam talks fail

By Armand N. Nocum

TALKS between ousted President Joseph Estrada and former Sen. Miriam Santiago collapsed yesterday as the senator—wooed by both administration and opposition camps—stuck to her guns and insisted that she cannot campaign alongside Sen. Loren Legarda, who is running for vice president in the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP).

In a telephone interview yesterday, Estrada admitted that Santiago, a specialist in constitutional and international law, had insisted that the issue of Estrada's allegedly unconstitutional removal from office should be the campaign cry of the opposition party.

"She can't take it ... she's fighting for the rule of law ... the illegitimacy of my removal from office," said Estrada who was ousted for corruption and incompetence in the second people power uprising of January 2001.

Estrada has tried but failed to contest the legitimacy of the Macapagal administration before the Supreme Court.

Estrada loyalists see Legarda as a major player in the alleged conspiracy to remove Estrada from power.

SANTIAGO

"That's the issue they will bring to the people," he said, adding that Santiago certainly cannot push for this campaign agenda with key leaders of Edsa II running in the opposition ticket.

He said Santiago wanted the KNP to project the issue as a "matter of principle."

Asked whether it would help if Legarda would adopt the opposition line about the alleged injustice done to Estrada, the jailed ex-President replied: "You know I cannot tell her what to do, she has her own mind."

Estrada is optimistic that he and Poe may still resolve matters, including the problem of Legarda's unacceptability to Estrada followers.

Even as he failed to get Santiago to agree to fill the last KNP senatorial slot, Estrada said he was still positive about eventually convincing the senator to change her mind.

"I think we can still get her ... I asked her to give me until the weekend, she remains an independent candidate for now," he said.

Santiago late Monday beat the deadline, for filing her certificate of candidacy under her own People's Reform Party.

In the meantime, he said "everything is still under negotiation."

But he denies talk that Santiago was asking for some concessions.

"She's not asking for anything," he said.

Joe de V pushes for Con-con polls

By Carlito Pablo

SPEAKER Jose de Venecia Jr. yesterday called for the approval of a bill that will allow the simultaneous election in next May's polls of 212 delegates to a Constitutional convention to amend the Constitution.

De Venecia made the the call in a letter that he said he will be forwarding soon to President Macapagal-Arroyo, Senate President Franklin Drilon and all members of the Senate and House of Representatives.

De Venecia said that if such a measure is passed anytime between Jan. 15 and Jan. 20, the Constitutional convention can begin its work in August, paving the way for a shift from the current presidential to a parliamentary and federal system by May 2007.

"The breakthrough to the new system, three years before the next presidential cycle ends in 2010, has become possible because of President Macapagal's willingness to serve only three years if she wins in the May elections," De Venecia said.

De Venecia told leaders and members of Congress that Ms Macapagal herself has "agreed to shepherd the wide-ranging political reforms called for by the system change, and to give way to a new head of government in mid-term."

De Venecia claims that Ms Macapagal has agreed to serve only as transition President until 2007—effectively cutting in half her new six-year term if she wins in May—to make way for the new system.

This was confirmed the other day by the President's point man for Charter change and presidential adviser on special concerns, Norberto Gonzales, but was denied by Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye who said it was a mere speculation.

De Venecia said that with a new parliament convening in May 2007, the 12 senators elected in 2004 will "automatically become members of the new parliament, representing their home districts."

He said that Commission on Elections chair Benjamin Abalos has advised that a Con-con bill would have to be approved by Congress and the President this January to allow the Comelec enough time to allot a space in the ballot for Con-con delegates.

Each of the country's 212 legislative districts will elect one Con-con delegate.

"There will be no extra costs if the elections for Con-con delegates are held simultaneously with the May elections," De Venecia said.

The House last year approved a resolution authorizing the two congressional chambers to form themselves into a constituent assembly to approve constitutional amendments but this was opposed by the majority of senators.

De Venecia said that House members were "now agreeable to a convention, the mode preferred by the Senate."

He said that ideally, the Con-con must wrap up its work between 90 and 180 days.

De Venecia said he would ask Batanes Rep. Florencio Abad, the Liberal Party president, to start coordinating with Drilon, who was recently named LP chair, in working for the immediate passage of the Con-con measure.

Gringo's defense: Free speech

By Philip C. Tubeza

INVOKING his right to free speech, Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan yesterday asked the Supreme Court to order the dismissal of the coup charges filed against him for allegedly masterminding the July 27 Oakwood mutiny.

Honasan said that even if there was some semblance of truth to the accusation that he told the mutineers to overthrow the government, he should still get off the hook since his alleged statement is covered by the right to free speech.

"Even if the charges in the complaint have the slightest vestige of truth, they do not constitute any crime. The Senator is charged criminally for the expression of an opinion," said Honasan's lawyer Daniel Gutierrez in a 76-page memorandum to the Supreme Court.

Honasan has been charged before the Department of Justice for allegedly conspiring with the Magdalo rebel soldiers in staging the July 27 mutiny at the Oakwood Premiere hotel in Makati.

"He is supposed to have added to the exposition of his National Recovery Program an incompatible opinion that recovery is possible only through a violent overthrow of government. The alleged statement, so antithetical to the program he was advocating, is nonetheless, an expression of an opinion, an exercise of free speech," Gutierrez said.

To bolster his arguments, Gutierrez cited a 1985 SC decision involving the revered civil libertarian and freedom fighter, former Sen. Jovito Salonga.

Salonga was alleged to have warned on the likelihood of violent struggle unless reforms are initiated during the waning years of the Marcos dictatorship.

In its ruling, the SC noted that Salonga's statement "about the likelihood of a violent struggle here in the Philippines if reforms are not instituted is nothing but a legitimate expression of freedom of thought and expression."

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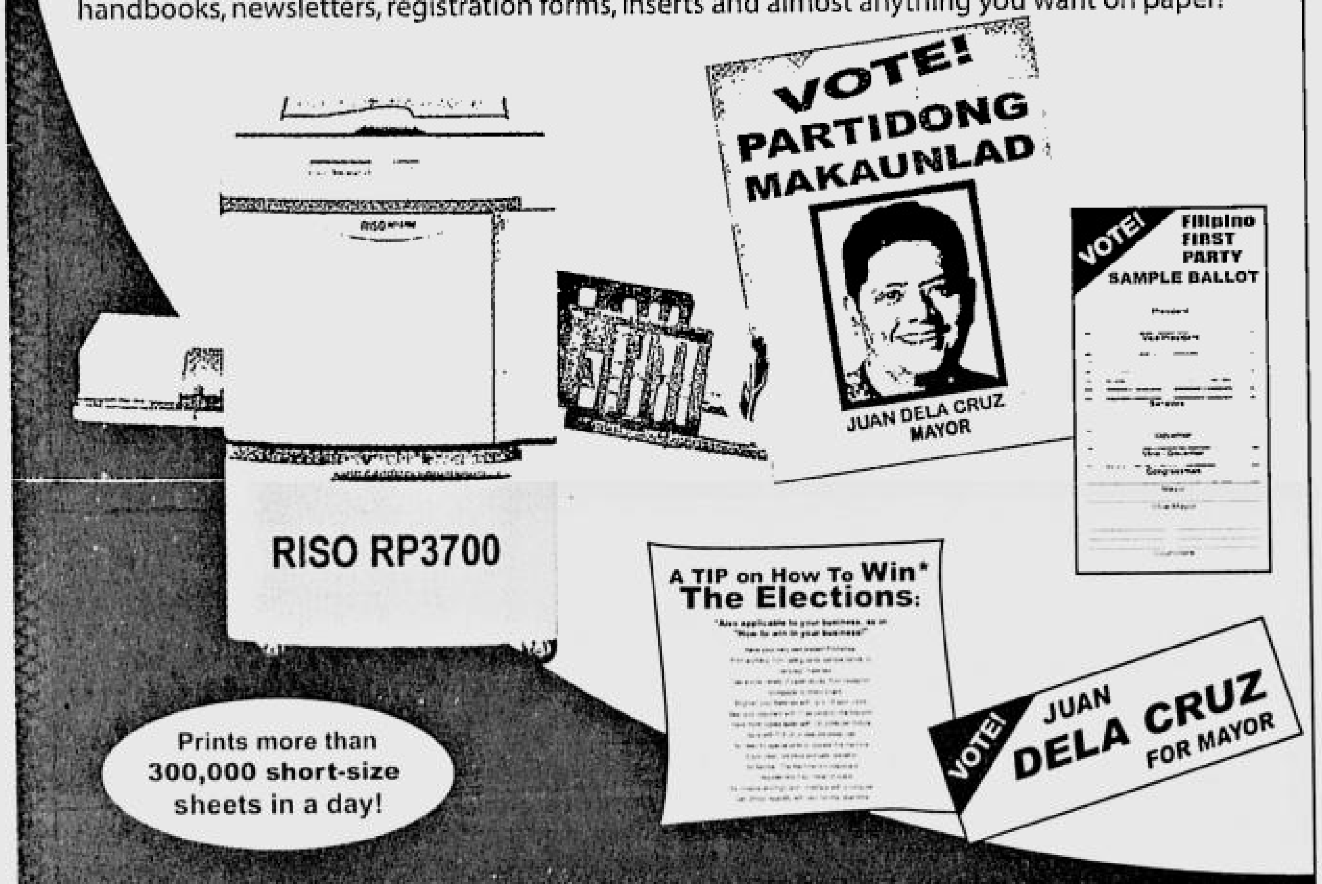
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NPA rebs rebuff solons' bid for truce extension

LIANGA, Surigao del Sur—Communist guerrillas yesterday rebuffed attempts by two legislators and other local officials to extend a Christmas ceasefire with the Maoist rebels, witnesses said.

A delegation led by House of Representatives members Prospero Pichay and Oscar Moreno visited a guerrilla base near this southern town, telling journalists they had authority to negotiate on behalf of the government.

Pichay told Jorge Madlos, spokesperson of the National Democratic Front in Mindanao, that the government wanted to extend a ceasefire that ends at midnight Tuesday.

However, Madlos said the communist movement's national leadership had already rejected a truce extension.

Pichay said President Macapagal-Arroyo wanted a possible extension of the ceasefire until the presidential election on May 10 to ensure a peaceful and orderly conduct of the polls.

The government had declared a ceasefire from Dec. 10 to Jan. 6 as part of the confidence-building measures to bring the rebels back to the negotiating table to finally end a 35-year Maoist insurgency that claimed thousands of lives.

The New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the NDF, separately declared a Christmas truce from Dec. 20 to Jan. 4.

Yesterday, Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the proposed extension of the suspension of military operations (Somo) against communist rebels until after the May elections this year will be discussed in a command conference starting today and tomorrow.

"We have been asked if we are going to extend this through the election period. This is a subject matter that will be discussed during a command conference at the GHQ (general headquarters). So we will be able to give some recommendations to the President on the problem of extension and non-extension of the ceasefire," Ermita said.

Ermita said the Somo could most likely be extended up to a few days after the May 10 elections. "But, as I said, this is still the subject of discussion in the command conferences."

However, he said the military will be on the offensive before a decision is reached on whether the Somo will be extended or not.

"Between now and the command conferences and the time a recommendation is submitted to the president, definitely there is no more effective Somo. *Pwede na mag* patrol *ang mga sundalo, pwede mag* offensive patrols (The soldiers can go on offensive patrol)."

The military has accused NPA rebels of breaking the truce agreement when they attacked Cpl. Alfredo Monutcho, 47, of the 57th IB in front of his house in Brgy. Tominamos, Sta. Rita, Eastern Samar, shortly before the New Year.

Monutcho's son was initially wounded but expired while being treated at the provincial hospital. Also injured were Monutcho's daughter Rebecca, 23.

Military spokesperson Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero said the military would apply its full might against the NPA once the suspension of military operations ends because of the killing of Monutcho.

Several congressmen have asked Malacañang and communist rebels to extend the ceasefire following comprehensive peace talks between the two panels. *AFP a with report from Alcuin Papa*

DOCS IN COMBAT

Civilian volunteers composed mostly of doctors and dentists take combat position during their Ranger training at Camp Aguinaldo. The volunteers are under the Armed Forces of the Philippines Reserve Command. EDWIN BACASMAS

Keep off politics, defense chief tells AFP

DEFENSE Secretary Eduardo Ermita has ordered the whole armed forces to stay away from politics in the May elections.

During the traditional Joint Department of National Defense-Armed Forces of the Philippines New Year's Call yesterday, Ermita reminded the officers to keep themselves "insulated from intrigues and political issues."

"With the coming elections, we must always keep in mind the constitutional mandate of the Department of National Defense and the Armed Forcers of the Philippines. Let us not be affected by the intrigues and issues in the political arena. Instead, let us focus our attention to accomplishing our mission effectively and efficiently," Ermita said.

In a recent policy directive, Ermita, a former vice chief of staff of the AFP, ordered the armed forces to undertake Troop Information and Education (TI&E) programs that will emphasize among other things, the constitutional duties and responsibilities of military personnel. *Alcuin Papa*

US tightens rules on visa applications

By Jerome Aning

AS PART of a heightened antiterrorist campaign worldwide, the United States would start fingerprinting applicants for US visas at all its consulates abroad within four months.

In the Philippines, the US Embassy in Manila would take digital fingerprints as well as pictures of all visa applicants, to be stored in databanks for use by immigration officers at all US ports of entry, said Chris Rowan of the mission's consulate section.

On Monday, US ports of entry began taking photographs and fingerprints of most arriving foreigners except those from 28 countries—Japan, Australia and European countries.

Rowan said infrared fingerprint scanning machines would be installed at the US Embassy in Manila by late April until mid-May.

US consul general David Donahue said that no additional costs would be imposed on visa applicants and that the $100 visa application fee remains.

Foreign travelers, however, would continue to pass through regular Customs points and answer questions at the ports of entry.

US officials said the system should be in place at all US consulates abroad by Oct. 26.

Robert Andrew Mocny, deputy director of the US Visitor and Immigration Status Indicator Technology Program (US-VISIT), said that all American diplomatic posts this year would take biometric data from visa applicants, including photos and inkless digital fingerprints as part of a new program to tighten US border security.

The fingerprints and photos of the applicants would be used by immigration officers at all US ports of entry to verify and check travelers going to the US.

Those who already have US visas would be enrolled in the biometric data gathering system and have their fingerprints and photos taken once they enter the US.

Exempted from the new visa rules, however, are minors aged 14 years and below, those aged 79 years old and above, government officials and representatives of international organizations.

The 28 countries that fall under the US visa waiver program would also be required to have their biometric features placed on their citizens' travel documents by Oct. 26. *With AFP report*

2 convicts set for execution

AUTHORITIES will execute its first convicts this month since lifting a nearly four-year moratorium on death penalty, a corrections official said yesterday.

The two unnamed prisoners will be put to death by lethal injection "on the same day" in the last week of January, unless President Macapagal-Arroyo grants them a reprieve or Congress passes a law abolishing capital punishment, Bureau of Corrections chief Dionisio Santiago said over dzBB radio.

He said he has ordered the national prisons director, who has jurisdiction over some 1,000 death row convicts, to conduct "dry runs" to make sure the executions follow legal procedures. The law prescribes a series of injections to induce death.

Under public pressure following a wave of kidnappings, Ms Macapagal declared last month that she would "no longer stand in the way of the executions scheduled by the courts for January 2004."

A moratorium on executions had been in place since March 2000, imposed by former President Joseph Estrada after pressure from the Catholic Church. *AFP*

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A Year Opener Message to President Arroyo:

Shield the Country against agents of Unbridled Liberalization

Your appointee at the DoTC, Mr. Alberto "Bertie" Lim, spoke of his mandate from you as all about protecting the aviation consumers, while completely disregarding the protection of existing jobs, and what it takes to truly build the competitive strength of our economy.

With the help of his media allies, Bertie Lim said all these protests against him are nothing but the "self-serving demands of a known airline tycoon and that the country's national interest is sacrificed to save a dying airline." But is the defense of the country's industry and its national patrimony and sovereignty a mere commercial demand?

To those who say they don't care about losing current jobs, we condemn you to no end. Philippine economy will not grow, tourists will not flood, and simply allowing mega air carriers of powerful countries to reign supreme over Philippine skies will not automatically generate jobs.

If we want to see millions of tourists flock our shores, what ought to be resolved are the basic issues of (worsening) peace and order, political (in)stability, infrastructure (under)development, (ineffective) tourism promotions. These what shoveled Thailand's tourism, and not because they simply spread their legs wide open to foreign carriers.

Madam President, we have more than fifty (50) foreign airlines currently enjoying operational rights into the country, but most of them hardly consume their full flying entitlements. We believe Mr. Lim and his likes downplayed all these to you, deliberately.

He is the same CAB official who had the gall to publicly lie through his teeth saying, he is not an AGILE agent when his "NGO," the Freedom to Fly Coalition (FFC) receives funds from the same US' think tank for drafting and peddling the air transport "liberalization" policy. **Fact is, in year 2000 and 2001, when Bertie Lim was still its Vice Chair, FFC was contracted by the USAID (through AGILE, DAI and PRISM) for its pro-open skies policy!**

If Bertie Lim says his post at the CAB is a "thankless job that is heavily taxing him of his personal time," we see no reason why he should stay any minute longer as its Director. Besides, your political allies (and even opposition Senators) already saw him as a liability of the DoTC. **Mrs. President, you do not deserve another baggage that will only cause a slice to your political strength and integrity, in the person of Bertie Lim.**

As the year begins, we commit ourselves in sustaining the fight to expose and oppose the ugly head of unbridled liberalization wrecking the foundation for a strong Philippine economy.

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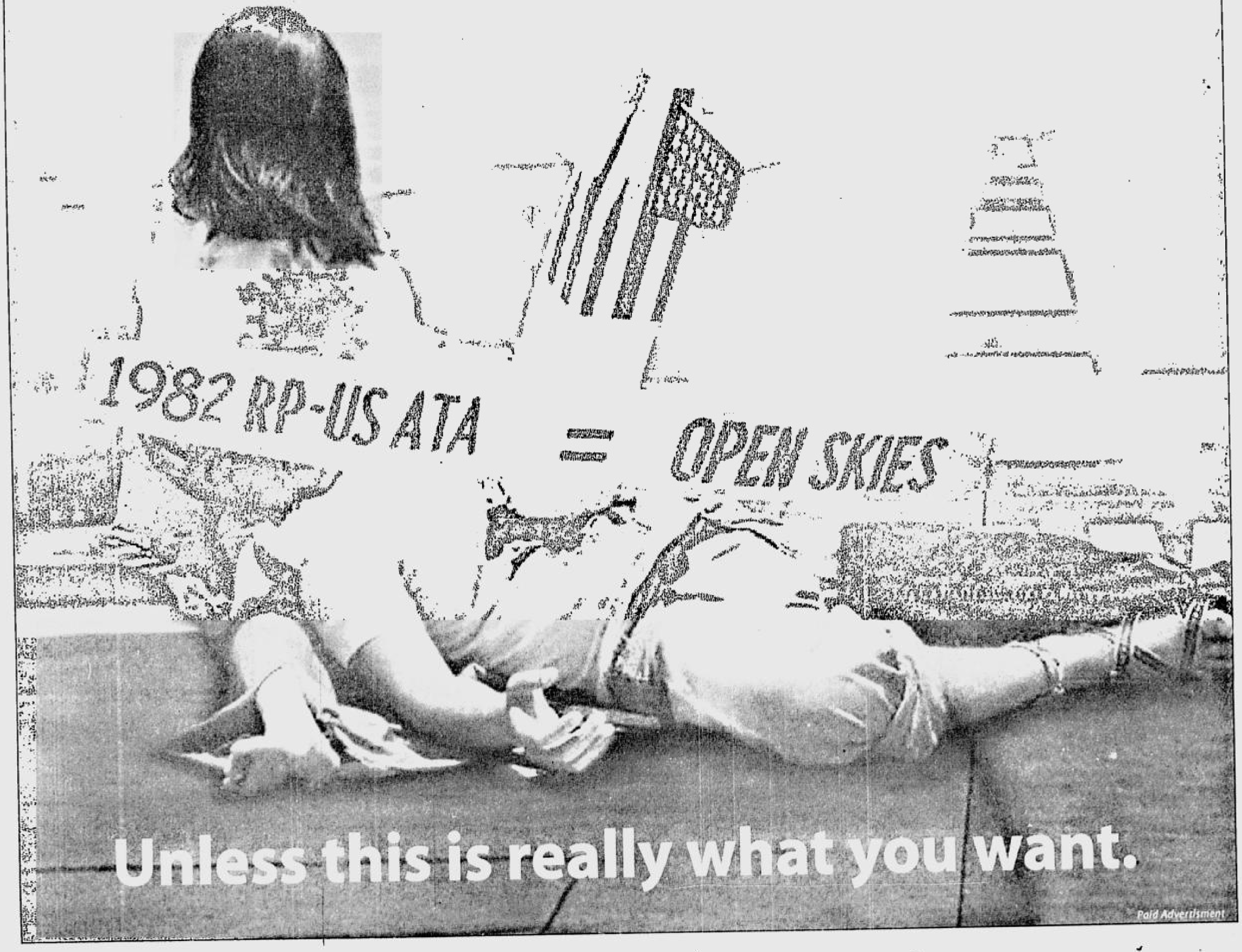
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Erap statements betray flight plan, gov't lawyers say

By Armand N. Nocum

ESTRADA

GOVERNMENT prosecutors yesterday said the alleged refusal by jailed former president Estrada to fully recognize the authority of the Sandiganbayan anti-graft court indicated that he was not planning to return to the country after undergoing knee surgery in the United States.

The Sandiganbayan justices said the prosecutors can take the matter to the Supreme Court if they opposed the court's decision to allow Estrada to go abroad for medical treatment.

"You better bring it up to the SC. We assure you over a pile of Bibles that there are no irregularities. We are acting strictly in accordance with the law. We granted it for humanitarian and medical reasons," said the presiding justice of the special division, Minita Chico-Nazario.

The prosecutors and Sandiganbayan Associate Justice Edilberto Sandoval have voiced their doubts about the decision, saying Estrada may well decide to flee once outside the Philippines and the jurisdiction of the court.

In yesterday's hearing, Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio cited Estrada's statements published in the INQUIRER as showing that the disgraced leader was not serious when he wrote a personal undertaking recognizing the authority of the court.

"I'm under duress. I was forced, compelled to abide by the wishes of the court due to [the] worsening situation," Estrada had told the INQUIRER in an interview, referring to his arthritis and multiple slipped disc problem.

"I believe I'm still President," he said.

On Dec. 23, the court granted Estrada's request to go to the United States for treatment but asked that he submit a personal undertaking promising to return to the country and declaring that he was "recognizing the authority of the court over his person and over the cases filed against him."

Estrada complied but used the word "submit" and not "recognize."

Showing the court a copy of the Dec. 31 issue of the INQUIRER, Villa-Ignacio said that once out of the country, Estrada could just go back on what he stated in the undertaking.

"When he is finally out of the court's jurisdiction, he can always say that he had decided not to return to country where he is subjected to political persecution and where conviction and the death penalty awaits him," he said.

Court-appointed lawyer Manuel Pamaran dismissed Estrada's statements to the INQUIRER as "hearsay."

Villa-Ignacio offered to call this reporter testify on Estrada's statements but the court did not take up the offer.

Nazario said the court has "continuing jurisdiction" over Estrada "whether he likes it or not."

Lawyer Jose Flaminiano, another Estrada court-appointed lawyer, noted that regardless of Estrada's view on his status, "personal opinion cannot prevail over [the] reality" that Estrada is no longer President.

Villa-Ignacio, however, persisted in his argument that allowing Estrada to leave was tantamount to "facilitating" his escape. He also warned that there was no way the court can get Estrada to return to the country if he escapes.

He also cited legal moves that Estrada might take to be able to remain abroad.

The last argument elicited a sharp rebuke from the court.

"*Hindi kami tanga na hindi namin alam iyan.* [We are not so stupid not to know that] ...We have adequate remedies available," Nazario said, pointing out that arrangements could always be made through "diplomatic channels to return Estrada to the country."

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Palace belittles latest Ibon poll

MALACAÑANG yesterday belittled the surveys of private think-tank Ibon Foundation which has, for the last two quarters, President Macapagal-Arroyo languishing in fourth place among the presidential candidates.

"I respect Ibon Foundation but I don't think (a survey) is their expertise," said Presidential campaign spokesperson and Housing secretary Michael Defensor in a briefing.

In the Ibon fourth quarter survey of 1,162 respondents conducted from Dec. 1 to 14, the President ranked fourth among the respondents' presidential choice with a 10.5 percent share. Leading was movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. with 26 percent, followed by former Education secretary Raul Roco with 22.5 percent, then Sen. Noli de Castro with 14.5 percent, who was slightly ahead of Sen. Panfilo Lacson with 10.4 percent. The President also ranked fourth in Ibon's third quarter survey behind Roco, De Castro and Poe.

Less reliable

Defensor refused to react on the Ibon survey results saying he would only comment "at a proper time when we have more reliable and genuine results."

He said Ibon was less than scientific in its survey methods, although its research director, Antonio Tujan, said the survey had a margin of error of plus or minus three percent which is similar to the other surveys.

"I saw his (Tujan's) interview on TV and when he was asked on the method used, he said they went from house to house, checked the household and asked who would they vote for," Defensor said. "I don't think this is a significant and substantial way of getting the . . . sentiments of people."

In contrast, Defensor said he found the Social Weather Station and Pulse Asia surveys as "definitely reliable." The President performed better in the two survey bodies' recent output.

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Loren yields Senate majority leader's post

By Michael Lim Ubac

SENATE President Franklin Drilon announced yesterday that vice presidential candidate Loren Legarda had "graciously offered" to relinquish the Senate majority leader post.

Drilon, who met with Legarda yesterday morning, said the senator had volunteered to step down to prove that she was not clinging on to her post following her decision to team up with opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

Drilon refused to say whether he regretted her decision, but indicated that a Senate reorganization was in the works following the entry of Sen. Rodolfo Biazon to the Liberal Party and Sen. John Osmena's entry to the administration's senatorial lineup.

Drilon said he would nominate Sen. Francis Pangilinan, the current assistant majority leader, to the post once the Senate resumes its session on Monday.

The administration bloc in the Senate now has 13 members, while nine remain with the minority, including Legarda. Prior to the realignment, the ruling bloc had 12, while the opposition had 10.

Legarda served for two and a half years as majority leader and steered the passage of major measures, including the Absentee Voting Act, the Dual Citizenship Act, the Epira Law, Anti-Money Laundering Law and Automation of Elections Law.

In a separate statement, Pangilinan said changes in the leadership structure were imminent after Legarda had cast her lot with the opposition.

"Likewise, the majority gained new allies with the entry of Senator Biazon to the Liberal Party and Sen. John Osmena's entry to the administration's senatorial lineup," said Pangilinan who, however, stressed that "the position should seek the person rather than the other way around. It is up to my colleagues in the majority to determine who the next majority leader should be."

He said that while he had already discussed it with the Senate President, "nothing is final until after plenary sessions next week."

RP burial . . .

From page A1

known as the White Falcons.

The war in Iraq has led to the deaths of 330 US soldiers in what the military calls hostile action, 215 of whom have been killed since President George W. Bush declared major combat operations over on May 1.

Bangayan became the sixth serviceman with Vermont connections killed in the war. He moved to Vermont after living for 21 years in the Philippines.

He lived briefly in Jay, a town of 427 residents, with his mother Helen, stepfather Victor Therrien, and younger sister Hilda. He obtained a permanent residency visa, and shortly after joined the Army.

"We were just so proud of him coming from the Philippines for just a short time and wanting to serve the United States," said Victor Therrien. "Coming from another country, he appreciated what we have here."

Army officials said Bangayan was killed by a major blow to the head. Therrien said Bangayan had visited them in Vermont for Thanksgiving and warned as he was leaving for Iraq that he might not be back.

"He said he really didn't want to go. He said he may not come back," Therrien said.

Friends and family said Bangayan wanted to go to nursing school and had been just weeks away from finishing his military service.

"He came back for a visit," his mother told WCAX-TV. "He said his term will be ended. But unfortunately, he is ... he is my hero."

The family said Bangayan's mother and sister would be flown to the Philippines for the funeral.

AP

It's like . . .

From page A1

"The way they put together their tickets, you can't distinguish [one lineup from the other]," Roco yesterday said of the senatorial slates of his opponents in the 2004 presidential derby.

He said there were now effectively "only two tickets"—the combined senatorial candidates of President Macapagal-Arroyo (Lakas-CMD) and movie star Fernando Poe Jr. (Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino), and the eight candidates of his own Alyansa ng Pag-asa.

"The Alyansa is the only true opposition," he declared.

Roco likened the current situation to the regime of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, whose KBL party lorded over the political scene.

He described Ms Macapagal and Poe as "the new KBL."

Indeed, the tickets of Roco's opponents are a surprising mix of opposition and administration stalwarts.

Ms Macapagal took in John Osmeña and Orlando Mercado and is said to be wooing Miriam Defensor-Santiago, all allies of ousted President Joseph Estrada, but dropped some Lakas stalwarts like Heherson Alvarez from the administration senatorial slate.

Poe meanwhile took in pro-Estrada-impeachment politicians led by Ernesto Herrera in his lineup, and his running mate is Sen. Loren Legarda.

With such "interchangeable candidates," the administration and opposition camps have lost their identity, Roco said.

He said neither was a "reconciliation ticket" because there was no common agenda.

"Reconciliation without justice will not be reconciliation," he said, alluding to Estrada's plunder trial. "It will be total victory for whoever prevails."

Roco said the compromise being exercised by the two camps was "so insulting to the Filipino people."

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Amoxicillin cap. 500 mg	✓	3.70	15.75	12.05/cap
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Amoxicillin susp. 250 mg/5 ml, 60 ml	✓	49.00	144.00	95.00/bot
Chloramphenicol cap. 500 mg	✓	3.40	37.75	34.35/cap
Chloramphenicol susp. 125 mg/5 ml 60 ml	✓	41.40	394.75	353.35/bot
Co-trimoxazole tab (TM-160mg SMZ-800mg)	✓	2.30	26.00	23.70/tab
Co-trimoxazole cap. (TM-80mg SMZ-400mg)	✓	2.60	14.80	12.20/cap
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Bromhexine HCL syrup 4 mg/5 ml, 60 ml	✓	26.70	74.75	48.05/bot
Carbocisteine cap. 500 mg	✓	2.40	12.25	9.85/cap
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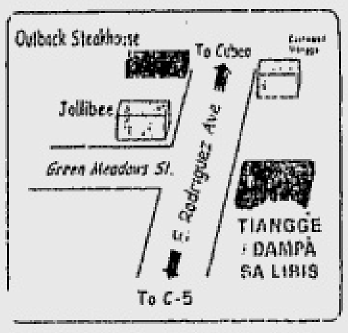

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Lacson: I am a serious candidate

LACSON

SEN. Panfilo Lacson yesterday insisted he was a serious candidate and a non-traditional politician at that.

The opposition senator issued the statement as he assailed his "detractors" for immediately dismissing his presidential bid after he failed to come up with a running mate and a Senate slate the other day, the filing deadline.

"I have filed my certificate of candidacy and I am not shirking from my pledge to offer myself as the real alternative to traditional politics," Lacson said.

He said his talks with potential running mates might have not prospered but the "absence of a definite vice presidential candidate with me today does not diminish my resolve to push and promote new and no-nonsense governance that our country sorely needs."

It also would not, he said, "preclude any partnership in the future with a vice presidential candidate who will support my vision of government."

Lacson also said he deliberately did not come up with a Senate slate as he noted that "recent events" confirmed his fears of "a ruinous and confusing senatorial campaign this year."

The senator said the "mix match" in the administration and KNP slates reinforced the notion that "elections are about personalities and popularity, instead of characters and platforms."

"Worse, recent events have shaken my belief that electoral choices should go beyond the commerce of man," Lacson added but did not elaborate.

He said his solo flight then "could very well be my best opportunity to show our people that I am not a traditional politician, and this is what people can expect of a Lacson presidency."

"I have pledged to serve with a fresh and new vision of our people, and I begin to serve this firm commitment today by running with a dedicated platform of government that can stand even without a vice presidential candidate and a senatorial slate in tow," Lacson said.

Foreign funds power surge of local stocks

From page A1

the opposition that would likely boost President Macapagal-Arroyo's reelection bid.

"A reelection causes less uncertainties," said Eric Claudio, trader of Unicapital Securities.

Oliver Plana, research head of Asiasec Equities, said the market remained strong due to optimism on telecom stocks such as PLDT and Globe. "Meralco is also rising due to its rate hike beginning this month, which should boost its revenues," he added.

Telecom stocks such as PLDT and Globe Telecom once again led the charge, with investors betting that they will post very good results for 2003 and 2004.

Analysts view the telecom sector as one of the bright spots in the economy, with revenues seen rising due a flood of text messages and voice calls in the run-up to May 10 elections.

PLDT, the country's largest telephone firm, ended up P10 or nearly one percent at P1,030, its highest closing in almost four years. More than P676 million worth of PLDT shares changed hands, accounting for 43 percent of total turnover.

PLDT president Manuel Pangilinan said Monday the company may exceed its 2003 net profit target of P10 billion after provisions. PLDT booked a P533-million charge in the third quarter from its job reduction program.

The growth of PLDT, which had a net income of P3.12 billion in 2002, is driven by its mobile unit Smart Communications Inc. For the first nine months of 2003, Smart Communications—the country's largest mobile phone firm with a customer base of more than nine million—recorded a net income of P10.3 billion.

The PLDT mobile phone group, including subscribers of affiliate mobile firm Talk N' Text under Pilipino Telephone Corp. (Piltel), controls about 58 percent of the country's wireless market.

Globe Telecom

PLDT rival Globe Telecom, which is jointly owned by Philippine conglomerate Ayala Corp. and Singapore Telecommunications, jumped 10.44 percent or P95 to P1,005 during Tuesday's trading.

The B-shares of Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), which are open to foreigners, rose 6 percent or P1.50 to P26.50. The A-shares of the country's largest power distributor, which are restricted to Filipinos, added 6.45 percent or P1 to P16.50.

Meralco has said it is expecting a revenue boost of P1.9 billion from a 2-percent increase in electricity rates starting this month.

The market has now broken several resistance levels and appears set for further gains on the view that shares would do well once the May 10 elections are out of the way. "An election year is always bullish," said Joseph Roxas, president of Eagle Equities Inc.

But traders said they expected the market to take a breather on Wednesday before resuming its ascent.

Astro del Castillo, managing director of financial management firm First Grade Holdings Inc., said he saw the main index moving within 1,500 to 1,550 points for the rest of the week.

The main index has risen 6.17 percent in the first two trading days of the new year after leaping nearly 42 percent in 2003.

"There's buying momentum sustained by Wall Street's gains," said Ron Rodrigo of Accord Capital Equities.

"The market has broken several resistance levels, helped by an upbeat mood in the US market and gains in telecom stocks. Investors are also likely positioning themselves on expectations of another major rally, especially after the May elections," said Gomer Tan of Regina Capital Development Corp. *Reports from Doris C. Dumlao, AP, AFP and Reuters*

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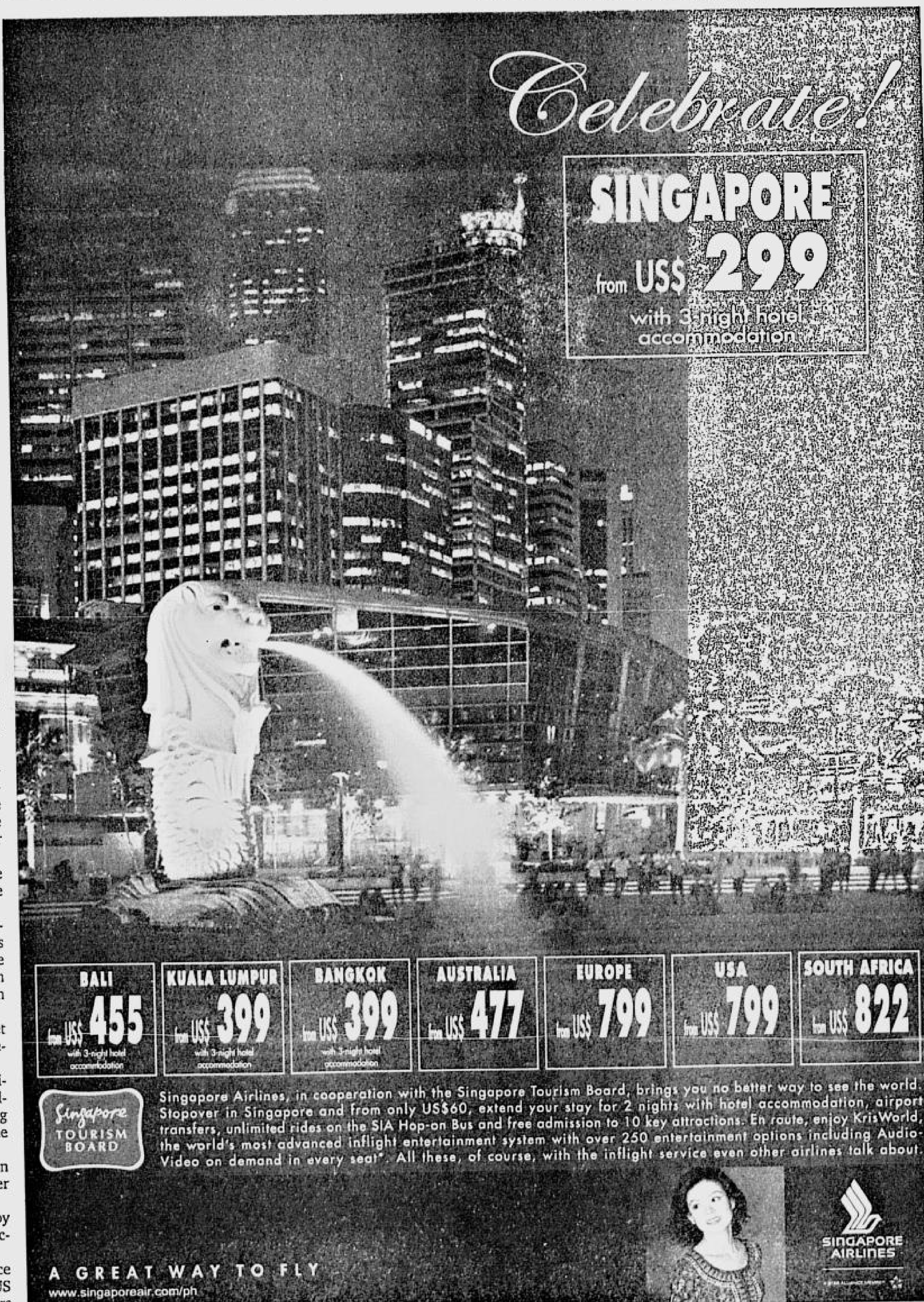
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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Bush refuses to lift sanctions on Libya

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—The Bush administration said on Monday it was keeping US sanctions against Libya in place but promised to take "tangible steps" to improve relations if Tripoli follows through on its pledge to get rid of its weapons of mass destruction.

"Despite the positive developments, the crisis with respect to Libya has not been fully resolved, and I have therefore determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to Libya and maintain in force the comprehensive sanctions against Libya," President George W. Bush said in a letter members of Congress issued during his visit to St. Louis.

But Bush also pledged: "As Libya takes tangible steps to address those concerns, the United States will in turn take reciprocal tangible steps to recognize Libya's progress."

Although the president did not spell out what steps he would take if Libya follows through, the administration could roll back some of the sanctions later this year as a goodwill gesture, leaving others in place for leverage. US officials said no decisions have been made.

Bush's announcement was widely expected despite comments from Libya's prime minister suggesting his government was pressing for their quick removal.

Tripoli and the families of the 1988 Lockerbie bombing victims agreed on an April deadline for ending the US sanctions, although a lawyer for the families said the deadline could be extended. The US has long maintained it is not bound by the agreement between the families and Libya and would remove its sanctions only when it deemed appropriate.

Lifting the sanctions would pave the way for US oil companies, including Oasis Group that includes Marathon Oil Co., ConocoPhillips and Amerada Hess, to resume activities in Libya, which they had to abandon when expanded US sanctions forced them to pull out in 1986.

In a surprise announcement last month, Libya pledged to abandon its weapons of mass destruction programs and allow unconditional inspections.

Bush praised the move as "an important and welcome step toward addressing the concerns of the world community." He said Libya stood to reap rewards through better relations with the United States if it follows through on its commitments.

"Libya's agreement marks the beginning of a process of rejoining the community of nations, but its declaration of Dec. 19, 2003, must be followed by verification of concrete steps," Bush said in a statement. *Reuters*

N. Korea offers bold concessions

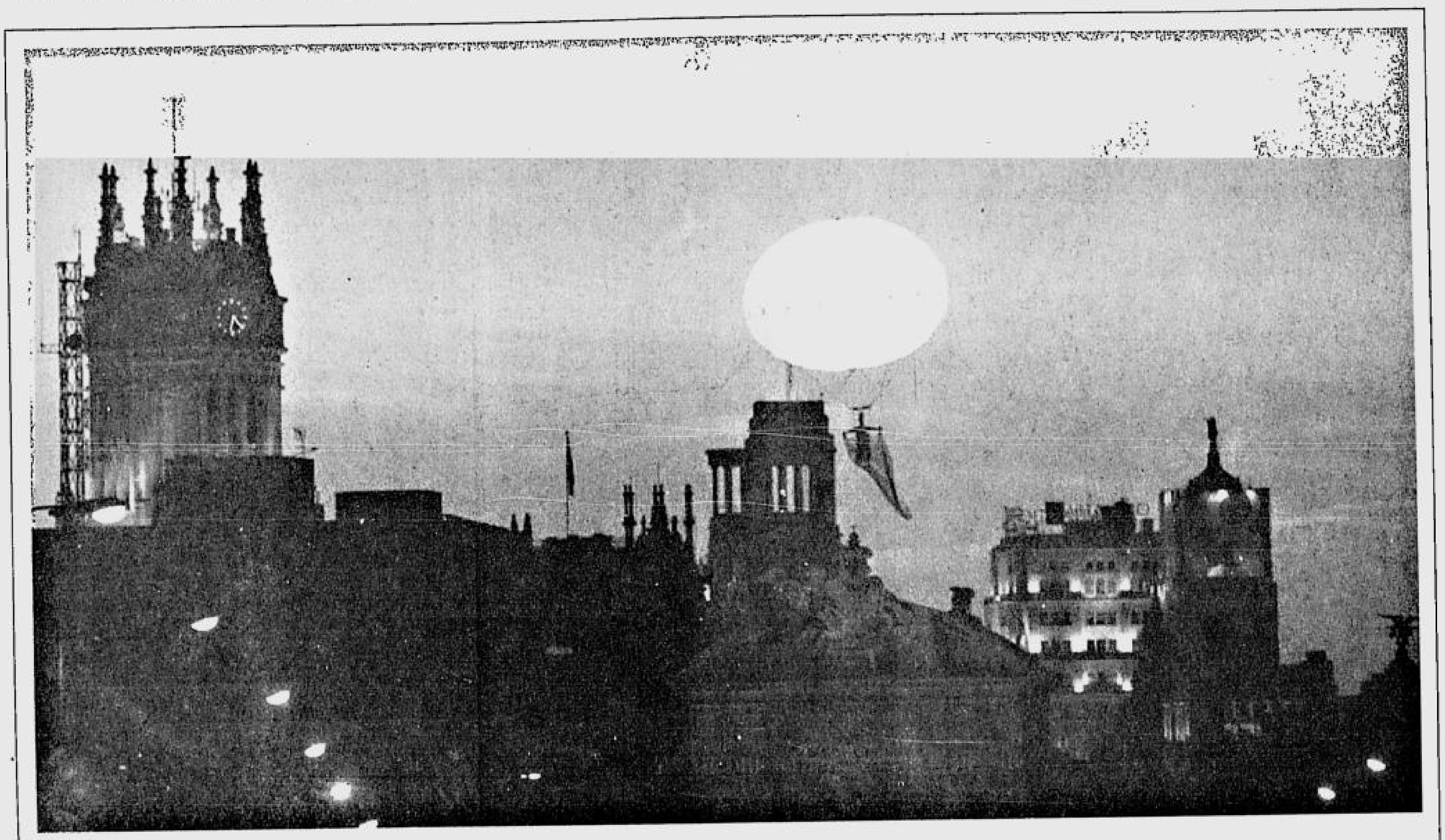
SEOUL—North Korea said Tuesday it would refrain from testing and producing nuclear weapons and freeze its nuclear facilities in a "bold" concession to the United States.

North Korea "is set to refrain from test and production of nuclear weapons and stop even operating nuclear power industry for a peaceful purpose as first-phase measures of the package solution. This cannot but be one more bold concession," Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency said.

Amid efforts to convene a new round of six-nation talks to end the nuclear crisis, North Korea said it expected concessions from Washington.

In return for the proposed freeze, Washington would deliver "simultaneous" actions including removing North Korea from a state department list of countries accused of sponsoring terrorism, lifting sanctions and resuming energy aid, the agency said in a dispatch monitored here.

Washington, which is seeking a commitment from North Korea to verifiably dismantle its nuclear weapons facilities, has dismissed previous Pyongyang offers of a nuclear freeze in return for rewards. *AFP*



NEW YEAR, NEW BEGINNING
An actor hanging from a balloon flies over central Madrid during the traditional Epiphany parade on Jan. 5. Traditionally children in Spain receive their Christmas presents on the morning of Jan. 6 delivered by the "Three Wise Men." REUTERS

Summit raises hopes for India-Pakistan peace

GIFT from across the border—Pakistani boy Mohammed Talha Shahzad is held by his mother Kanwal Shahzad in a Madras Hospital after eye surgery. The blind 15-month-old baby boy was given the gift of vision from a deceased Indian woman whose eye was transplanted after complicated surgery on Dec. 23. AFP

ISLAMABAD—South Asian leaders wrapped up their first summit in two years on Tuesday, a gathering that saw the first talks between nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan since 2001 and raised hopes for greater regional cooperation.

The seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) agreed to launch a free-trade area from 2006, to draw up a social charter for its 1.4 billion people and to fight terrorism.

In a show of unity at the concluding session of the three-day summit, foreign ministers linked hands after signing the three documents while their leaders looked on and applauded.

But the success of moves towards SAARC's aim of greater integration hinges on peace between India and Pakistan, its biggest members.

Officials have declined to give details of Monday's groundbreaking talks between Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, or to say whether they had made any progress toward resolving their decades-old dispute over Kashmir, the heart of their rivalry.

But diplomats said the Vajpayee-Musharraf meeting was in itself a step forward in the slow process of rebuilding relations.

Pakistan said "detailed discussions" with India had taken place in a good atmosphere and both sides said the leaders were keen to keep the momentum going to repair relations.

Two years ago, the neighbors, who have fought three wars since independence from Britain in 1947, came to the brink of another war over Kashmir after an attack on the parliament in New Delhi that India blamed on Pakistan-backed militants.

Ties have gradually improved since April when the 79-year-old Vajpayee launched what he called a final bid for peace in his lifetime.

In November, Pakistan announced a ceasefire along the front line in Kashmir, but violence between security forces and Muslim rebels has continued on the Indian side, which India accuses Pakistan of fomenting.

Pakistan denies helping the rebels and accuses Indian security forces of widespread human rights abuses in Kashmir.

Past attempts to make peace have often failed under the weight of overblown expectations, or because they were sabotaged by hawks on both sides. It remains unclear whether the talks have taken the two sides any closer on the issue of Kashmir. *Reuters*

Britain says it may keep troops in Iraq till 2007

LONDON—British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said on Monday British troops were likely to stay in Iraq for years, possibly until 2007, to try to stabilize a country in the face of an insurgency against occupying forces.

With guerrillas staging daily attacks on US-led forces in Iraq, Poland's president said Nato may decide in June whether to take on more of the burden. But Nato's new secretary general said the alliance's top priority for the moment was Afghanistan.

While other countries including Poland have contingents in Iraq, US troops form the vast majority of occupation forces.

Britain was Washington's chief ally in the March invasion despite domestic opposition and has more than 10,000 troops there.

Speaking on BBC radio a day after Prime Minister Tony Blair paid a surprise visit to British soldiers in the southern Iraqi city of Basra, Straw said it was "a fact" that substantial numbers of troops would remain in Iraq for a long time to come.

"I can't give you an exact timescale... but it's not going to be months, for sure," Straw said. Asked whether it would be years, he replied: "Yes, but I can't say whether it's going to be 2006 or 2007."

US administrators in Iraq have set a timetable to transfer power to Iraqis by the end of June but say foreign troops will stay on after the handover.

During his visit to Basra, Blair urged soldiers to concentrate on winning the peace and indicated they would be there for the long haul.

Straw said British troops were key to providing stability for a political process that includes plans to select an Iraqi national assembly by the end of May. *Reuters*

A 120-YEAR-OLD Iraqi refugee woman, who refused to be identified, arrives at the port of Basra on Jan. 5. More than 200 Iraqi refugees arrived from Iran in the third batch of Shiite Iraqis to return home since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. AFP

Japan deems US mad cow safeguards below par

TOKYO—Japan's top agriculture official said on Tuesday that US safety precautions put in place since the discovery of its first case of mad cow disease are not up to Japanese standards.

"The US safeguards are not up to the level of those (in Japan)," Agriculture Minister Yoshiyuki Kamei told a news conference.

The comment came a day after similar remarks by Vice Agriculture Minister Yoshiaki Watanabe, who told reporters on Monday that Japan had some doubts about the effectiveness of US safeguards.

Japan, which has confirmed nine cases of mad cow disease since the brain-wasting illness was first discovered in Japan in September 2001, tests all domestic cattle used for consumption.

Kamei told Tuesday's conference that he wanted the United States to conduct the same type of tests as those used in Japan.

Last week, the United Sates announced six safety measures including a ban on the use of sick or crippled "downer" cattle for human food.

But the United States does not test all cattle used for consumption and has so far responded cooly to the idea.

Japan, the No. 1 buyer of US beef, suspended US beef imports immediately after the Dec. 23 announcement of the first US case of mad cow disease, or bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

A Japanese government source said on Monday that a Japanese technical team was planning to go to the United States this week to review US safety measures.

Kamei told reporters that details of the trip had not yet been set.

Japan has told US officials that it is still too early to begin discussions on easing the import suspension.

Separately, Japan's trade minister told reporters on Tuesday that the mad cow issue was likely to be raised when he visits Washington this week.

"It's natural they would raise the matter, we are their biggest export market. I want to have frank talks," Shoichi Nakagawa told reporters after a cabinet meeting.

"When we had BSE in Japan, it was a big shock for us and for the population. Everyone has worked hard since then and confidence in our beef has returned, and my basic stance is that we can't allow anything to shake that confidence," he said. *Reuters*

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Pacificador files candidacy for vice governor of Antique

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Behind bars, former Assemblyman Arturo Pacificador is running for vice governor of Antique province.

"I'm running in order to bring back dignity to the provincial board which has been eroded during the last few years because of political squabbles," said Pacificador who filed his certificate of candidacy on Monday.

He is running against provincial board members Eric Otayde (Liberal Party), the running mate of reelectionist Gov. Salvacion Zaldivar-Perez, and Rhodora Cadiao (Lakas-CMD), the running mate of incumbent Vice Gov. Roberto Operiano.

Pacificador ran for congressman in the lone district of the province in 1995 but finished third behind Jovito Plameras and Exequiel Javier. He also finished third in 2001 when he ran for governor against Perez and Damian Marfil.

Unlike in the two elections where he ran as a candidate of the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, the party founded by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, Pacificador is running as an independent candidate this time.

Pacificador, a staunch Marcos ally and former deputy minister for public works, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview that the infighting between provincial board members belonging to the camps of Perez and Javier stalled legislation for the welfare of the residents of Antique.

Javier is also seeking reelection as the province's governor.

Tagged as the mastermind in the murder of former Gov. Evelio Javier and the wounding of several supporters of the murdered governor, Pacificador is detained at the Antique provincial jail along with 11 of his co-accused.

In an order, the Antique Regional Court denied bail to Pacificador and all but one of his co-accused.

It is doubtful if Pacificador will be allowed by the Antique Regional Court to leave the jail in order to campaign for vice governor.

Judge Rudy Castrojas, presiding judge of the RTC Branch 12, has allowed Pacificador to leave the jail only for medical check ups and for emergency reasons.

But Pacificador said he has "many" volunteers who will campaign for him if he is prohibited from campaigning by the court.

He said he is confident that he will get more than the 23,000 votes he garnered in 2001 and the 25,000 votes he got in 1995.

The slain Javier was a staunch supporter of then candidate Corazon Aquino who ran in a snap elections against Marcos.

Pacificador was a loyal follower of Marcos and was believed to have plotted to murder Javier and his supporters in order to prevent Aquino from winning in Antique.

Javier was later declared a hero after the downfall of Marcos.

Funds raised for victims of bombing attack

PARANG, Maguindanao—Local officials here have started a fund raising campaign in an effort to help victims of Sunday's explosion that as of last count has already claimed 22 lives.

At least 45 of the more than 80 injured victims, including a seven-month-old infant, remain in hospitals and most of them could not foot their medical bills according to municipal councilors Butch Dicay and Gaudencio Teves.

Dicay and Teves spearheaded the "Piso mula sa puso" campaign that kicked off on Tuesday saying any amount would certainly help to alleviate the problem of the victims' families.

"We are knocking at the door of your heart to please shell out a fraction of your money for the benefit of the wounded," Teves said.

Dicay said donations could be coursed through the Parang Parish or the Church-run radio station dxMS in Cotabato City.

Virgilio Leyretana, deputy presidential assistant for Mindanao, said he already wrote Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman to provide financial assistance to the survivors. Meanwhile, police said the explosion, which also hurt Mayor Vivencio Bataga, was politically motivated.

Supt. Isnaji Bantala, police chief in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, said Bataga was obviously the target of the bomb.

The bomb, fashioned out of an 81-mm mortar shell, exploded as soon as Bataga finished a speech before basketball fans, who trooped to the open gymnasium for a tournament.

It was the fourth attempt to blast him to death. *Edwin Fernandez, Rosa-May de Guzman and Nash Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

NPA not interested in extending ceasefire

LUCENA CITY—The communist New People's Army has expressed disinterest in the possible extension of the holiday ceasefire, which expires today.

Communist Party of the Philippines spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal said any self-imposed cessation of armed hostilities by the revolutionary movement does not depend on the government's declaration of truce.

"We've been declaring ceasefire in the past but only in response to the revered traditional activities of the Filipinos like Christmas or in preparation for the release of our prisoners of war. Never was it declared because of any government's action or in response to what it intends to do," Rosal said in a mobile phone interview.

"The NPA has no plans to call for another ceasefire just because President Macapagal-Arroyo's government is planning to extend its own. For the Red fighters after our ceasefire ended, it's a go for the launching of intensified tactical military offensives against the enemy," he said.

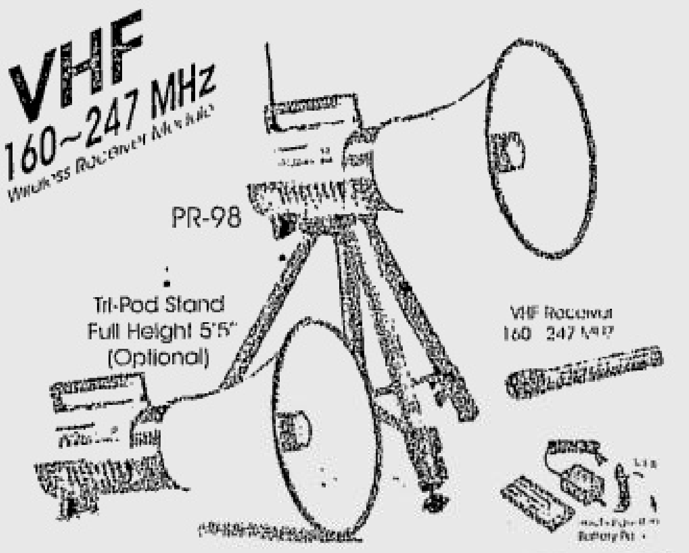
Malacañang said it was studying whether to extend the Christmas truce with communist rebels, which ends today, hoping it would pave the way for the start of "meaningful peace negotiations" with the communist-led National Democratic Front.

According to presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye, the President is just awaiting the assessment and recommendation of Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita who had recommended the implementation of the suspension of military operations last month before deciding on whether to extend the ceasefire or not.

The President declared a ceasefire from Dec. 10 until midnight of Jan. 6.

Rosal said genuine peace can only be realized when the roots of the armed conflict are resolved.

"For as long as these roots are not eradicated, any cessation of the armed conflict now will only be temporary, and the conflict will once more intensify," he said. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



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Mike Arroyo strays from Gloria pick, endorses bid of 'Pidal'

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Blood is thicker than politics.

First Gentleman Mike Arroyo was here on Monday to show his support for his younger brother Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo Jr. who is running for congressman in the province's fifth district.

He went with Ignacio when his younger brother filed his certificate of candidacy at the Commission on Elections (Comelec) provincial office at about 1:40 p.m. on Monday.

Mike Arroyo has openly expressed his support to his brother despite the stand of his wife, President Macapagal that she respects the equity of the incumbent in the province, meaning whoever is the incumbent elected official gets to be endorsed by the ruling Lakas-CMD and by the President.

"I'm here giving my support as a brother," the first gentleman said. "This is a natural thing as any brother would do."

Negros Occidental Rep. Apolinario Lozada is running for reelection as fifth district congressman under the banner of the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats.

Iggy admitted that President Macapagal had asked him two days ago not to run under the Lakas-CMD in deference to the policy on equity of the incumbent.

"Our President is very good and she respects the rule of the party. Jun Lozada has the equity of the incumbent. Not withstanding her kinship with me she does not want to break the rules," Arroyo Jr. said.

So as not to violate the policy, Iggy Arroyo went on leave as regional chair of the Lakas-CMD in Western Visayas on Saturday and filed his candidacy under the Kampi ticket, the President's original party.

Iggy Arroyo said he is still hoping Lozada will give way. Lozada has already filed his certificate of candidacy.

Iggy Arroyo said he began feeling the pulse for his congressional bid in the province's fifth district after Lozada told him about three years ago of his plan to run for the Senate. Lozada, however, changed his mind.

The President's brother-in-law, who got embroiled in the Jose Pidal controversy, claimed that he has the support of four of the six mayors and 88 of the 117 barangay captains in the fifth district of Negros Occidental.

Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson, has accused the First Gentleman of keeping millions of pesos under the Jose Pidal account.

Bulacan governor denies irregularity in loan plan

"THERE was no fund misuse and I am ready to face any probe."

This was the statement made yesterday by Bulacan Gov. Josefina "Josie" de la Cruz amid allegation by the Movement for Responsible Enterprise (More), a non-government organization, that she used the province's special education fund (SEF) as collateral for a P215-M loan with the Land Bank of the Philippines.

In a statement, De la Cruz said concerned Bulacan residents, including parents and teachers, however, viewed the technical malversation leveled by More against her as part of the smear campaign to destroy her bid for a third term.

"It's very unfortunate that even during the Christmas holidays, my detractors chose to employ underhanded and destructive methods," De la Cruz said.

De la Cruz vehemently denied the charges hurled against her, saying the LBP even encouraged other local government units (LGUs) to do the same as far as the search for funds is concerned in their respective areas.

De la Cruz said the loan procurement was not a unilateral act but was approved by two government boards.

"The loan utilization was duly approved by the provincial board and school board. I serve as chair of the school board and I was only one of the members that reviewed and approved it," she said.

The loan was used to pave the way for the construction of 2,500 school buildings.

Dad urges fire probe

LUCENA CITY—A city councilor here formally requested President Macapagal-Arroyo to help shed light on the deadly fire on New Year's Eve that killed at least 19 people and destroyed millions of pesos worth of property.

In a privilege speech during the regular session of the Sangguniang Panlunsod on Monday, Councilor Nick Pedro asked the President to order the Department of Justice and the National Bureau of Investigation to conduct an immediate investigation of the fire. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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GMA execs say Nani not lone Lakas gov bet

BATANGAS CITY—Reacting to yesterday's INQUIRER story saying that former justice secretary Nani Perez is President Macapagal-Arroyo's candidate for governor of the Province of Batangas, members of the Koalisyon ng Lakas ng Batangas said it was not only Perez whom the President endorsed for provincial governor.

This was even confirmed by Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita, regional chair of the Lakas-CMD Party, who demanded that the INQUIRER correct the news report.

"Both of them, Nani (Perez) and Mayor Sanchez are GMA's men. This makes Batangas a free zone," Ermita said.

"Although Nani is the official candidate of Lakas, Sanchez, who is the gubernatorial candidate of the Liberal Party, is a member of the Lakas alliance."

GMA bets

Only last Friday, the President endorsed the candidates of the coalition after a lunch meeting at the Malacañang Palace, including the coalition's candidate for governor, Sto. Tomas town mayor Arman Sanchez, and running mate former Batangas City Mayor Angelito "Dondon" Dimacuha.

Ermita explained that since Perez is the official candidate of Lakas and President Macapagal-Arroyo is the party chair, it follows that the President would support the former justice secretary.

"But since GMA doesn't want to lose the support of 26 Batangas mayors if she endorses only Nani, and since the Liberal Party belongs to the Lakas coalition, the President decided to also support Sanchez and the coalition," Ermita said, "and that makes the elections in Batangas a very unique one."

Majority of the province's mayors who were members of the coalition and who used to belong to the ruling Lakas Party transferred to the LP to join Sanchez.

Ermita stressed that President Macapagal-Arroyo didn't mean to endorse both candidates but only to have them fight each other.

"The two of them are the ones who decided to both run for governor. President Arroyo only asked for the alliance of the Liberal Party," Ermita said.

"Now, both Nani and Sanchez decided to run for governor. May the best man win. But both of them are technically our candidates."

Coalition

The Koalisyon ng Lakas ng Batangas was formed in July last year by local politicians in Batangas to prevent Perez from coming back to the political arena.

Perez, who filed his candidacy for governor at the Batangas Commission on Elections office last Monday morning, is still being investigated by the Swiss government for alleged money laundering and his $2 million Swiss account.

Since early last year, Perez has been losing the support of the Batangas mayors and other local politicians.

Out of the province's 34 mayors, only three attended his press conference on Dec. 5.

No support

And when he filed his certificate of candidacy, no mayor went to show support to the former justice secretary.

Perez's running mate Ricky Recto shocked the Batangas people on Monday after he joined the former justice secretary and filed his certificate of candidacy for vice governor.

Recto has been going the rounds of the entire province since 2002, and had announced that he intended to run for governor.

But he slid down on the last day of filing the certificate of candidacy and filed his candidacy for vice governor of the former justice secretary instead. *Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

HOMECOMING for Zamboanga's first woman mayor. PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Lobregat death alters Zambo political landscape

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The death of Mayor Maria Clara Lobregat could drastically alter the political landscape of the city according to a ranking poll official.

This developed as Erap pal Lepeng Wee, who lost to Lobregat in 2001, filed his certificate of candidacy for the mayoral race.

"It's like boxing, if you were hit hard and fell down, stand up again, gain more strength and fight again," Wee told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Wee was in Manila. His secretary, Alejandro Rodriguez, filed his CoC before the local Comelec office on Monday morning.

The 58-year-old Wee, who figured in the release of at least four Sipadan hostages, said he was running as independent.

Comelec director for Western Mindanao Helen Aguila Flores said with Wee's entry, there would be "a 360-degree turn in this city's political landscape."

Flores told the INQUIRER that Lobregat's running mate Vice Mayor Erico Basilio Fabian has already opted to run for a House seat.

This left political observers guessing about the real plans of Rep. Celso Lobregat, the late mayor's son.

Some said the congressman would run for mayor while others said he would run for reelection.

If he decides to run for reelection, he would face Fabian, a close ally of his mother.

The Lobregats were silent about politics as they mourn the death of the mayor.

Representative Lobregat said his mother's remains, which were flown here on Monday afternoon, would be brought back to Manila for burial on Tuesday.

He said the family wants to give supporters and friends a chance to see the late mayor before she is buried.

Hundreds of people took turns daily in viewing the mayor's remains, which lie at the cathedral here, since Monday afternoon. *Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Ousted Ecija town mayor won't relinquish post to rival

CABANATUAN CITY—Mayor Sonia Lorenzo of San Isidro, Nueva Ecija, who on Saturday lost to political rival Nestor Magno in a special canvassing of election returns, reported for work on Monday, saying that her proclamation as mayor in 2001 has not yet been annulled.

She went to her office about 7 a.m., received her well-wishers and participated in the flag ceremony of officials and employees of the municipal government.

Magno, who was proclaimed by the board of canvassers last Saturday as the elected mayor of San Isidro town, did not try to go to the municipal hall to take his post.

Lorenzo, in a phone interview, decried the hastiness done in proclaiming Magno as the winner. She said what was done was a "railroading" of Magno's proclamation.

"They stepped on my legal rights. They hurried up what should be the right procedures," she said.

Lorenzo said she would step down only when there is a legal order to do so.

In the special canvassing of election returns, Magno bested Lorenzo by more than 3,011 votes.

Magno's votes were counted in 2001 but the canvassing was stopped due to a disqualification order issued by the Commission on Elections. *Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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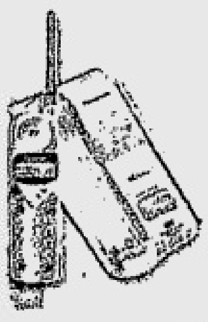

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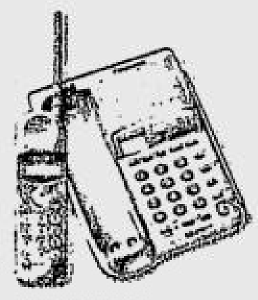

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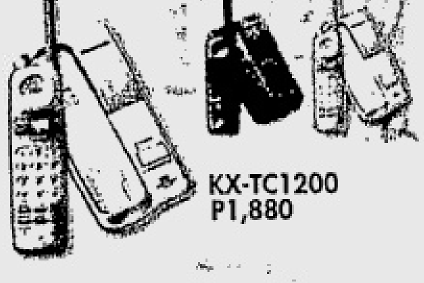

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Mayoral race pits father against son

SAN PASCUAL, Batangas—For the second time, this town's former mayor will again run against his son, the incumbent mayor, in one of the province's most colorful election scenes.

San Pascual Mayor Boyet Magsaysay, a member of the Koalisyon ng Lakas ng Batangas, filed his Certificate of Candidacy (CoC) Monday morning under the Liberal Party while his father, Mario Magsaysay Sr., also filed his CoC for the same post under the Kampi Party.

"This is not another drama that we're playing; this is for real, and I have former justice secretary Nani Perez to blame," Boyet said.

The mayor said it was Perez who convinced his father to run for mayor. *Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Tension grips Samar town as mayor declared loser

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Tension now looms in Pagsanghan town, Samar after a regional trial court ordered its mayor to vacate his post and declared his rival as the real winner in the 2001 elections.

Judge Roberto Navidad of RTC Branch 40 in Tarangan town Samar nullified the proclamation of Mayor Violeto Ceracas and ordered him to hand the post over to Noel Repol.

The court ruled that Ceracas lost to Noel Repol by 76 votes during the 2001 elections, which the court said was marred by massive fraud.

"After a very careful study and meticulous and painstaking appraisal of the contested ballots, the court finds and so holds that the cheating and commission of various frauds and irregularities in the contested precincts was massive," Navidad said in his decision.

The order was dated Dec. 30 but was released only on Jan. 5, the deadline for the filing of certificates of candidacy. Ceracas and Repol are running for mayor of Pagsanghan.

Samar Rep. Reynaldo Uy, an ally of Repol, told the INQUIRER that the situation in Pagsanghan was "very tense" because Ceracas refuses to step down.

He said some supporters of the mayor put up a blockade at the municipal hall to prevent police from implementing the order.

The INQUIRER learned that Senior Supt. Conrado Calvario, Samar provincial police director, was set to serve the order.

Ceracas of Lakas-NUCD was proclaimed "winner" on May 16, 2001, after he defeated his lone rival, Repol of the Liberal Party by a mere 66 votes.

The town, 158 kilometers west from Tacloban City, has more than 5,000 registered voters.

Repol filed his election protest on May 23, 2001 before the RTC of Tarangan, which has jurisdiction over election protests.

Repol said Ceracas committed fraud and irregularities during the elections.

Ceracas appealed to the First Division of the Commission on Elections, seeking the dismissal of the election protest.

Army says rebels threat to peaceful polls

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The military yesterday said tension was expected to rise in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and other areas in Mindanao, where Moro and communist rebels operate, because of the election period.

Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko said because of the expected tension, these areas could be considered election hot spots.

"The basis of our assessment is the two months . . . of continuous violence," Kyamko said.

Kyamko said because of this projection, the military has tightened security, particularly in Barira and Parang towns in Maguindanao, and the Provinces of Sulu, Surigao, Agusan, Davao and Compostela Valley.

He said most violence occurring in these areas for the past months had been political in nature.

The latest politically-related attack was the explosion in Parang, Maguindanao on Sunday afternoon where 22 people were killed.

Kyamko said the military is also training its guns on areas where the New People's Army (NPA) operates "because of persistent reports of extortion and pressures against local candidates such as the so-called (permit to campaign fees)."

Kyamko said the military was willing to deploy security personnel to politicians who have become targets of assassination or threats with permission from the Comelec. *Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

'Parol' fest fosters Pinoy unity in San Francisco

By Tonette Orejas

EDITOR'S NOTE: Pampanga correspondent Tonette Orejas joined last week the provincial delegation to the historic and culturally-rich San Francisco Christmas Lantern Festival. Her report:

NINE days after Christmas, two giant *parol* (Christmas lanterns) still graced the mini-gardens leading to the entrances of the red brick-walled St. Patrick's Church in downtown San Francisco in California.

"We are still savoring the spirit of Paskong Pinoy," MC Canlas said Thursday night (Friday in the Philippines). European tourists who walked past the church stopped and watched the glowing Yuletide pieces imported from the Christmas capital of the Philippines, the City of San Fernando in Pampanga.

Each measuring 12 feet in diameter and fitted with 1,000 light bulbs, these modern-day and world-renowned renditions of the Star of Bethlehem flashed colorful patterns of Sampaguita flowers, fans and stars through a rotor, a unique electronic device developed by Kapampangan craftsmen trained in the centuries-old religious folk art of making *parol*.

Almost two weeks after Christmas, small lanterns still decked the windows and doors of more than 1,000 Filipino homes.

The lanterns were made in October in lantern-making workshops participated in by Filipino parents and their children, either raised or born in the United States.

First in US

The two giant lanterns and their smaller counterparts were the top attractions in the San Francisco Parol Festival, the first of such held in the US, according to Canlas, a cultural historian and the community strategist of the Filipino American Development Foundation.

The FADF, the St. Patrick's Parish and the Bay Area Pampanga Organization (Bapo) began the festival on Dec. 15, the start of the nine-day Misa de Gallo in San Francisco, where about 50,000 mostly Catholic Filipinos reside.

The event was actually, in Canlas' words, a "synergy" of the parish's desire to celebrate the Filipino Christmas tradition, the FADF's search for an appropriate lighting ceremony for the launch of its Bayanihan Community Center, and the Bapo's advocacy of Kapampangan and Filipino culture.

The parade of 500 lanterns from Mission Street to 6th and 3rd Streets down to St. Patrick's Church, with children either holding lanterns or rattling noisemakers made of bottle caps, looked like modest versions of lantern festivals held in San Fernando (the annual Ligligan Parol or the giant lantern festival) and at the University of the Philippines' Diliman campus.

But Canlas said one good, likely lasting result emerged from the record-making festival and the merriment from having a first taste of Pinoy Christmas away from one's native land.

He said the festival fostered a spirit of unity, which is being harnessed to strengthen the bond among Filipino families and communities in the Bay Area.

"(The festival) is not only to make our presence felt as Filipinos in the Bay Area but also to have the whole community think and move as one," said Msgr. Fred Al. Bitanga, pastor of the St. Patrick's Church.

Bitanga, who administers to thousands of overseas Filipino workers in the city with the assistance of Fr. Elmer Magat and Fr. Ray Reyes, said many have easily identified with the *parol* because it has become "also the symbol of every Filipino's dream to reach out his dream of finding a greener pasture for his family in migrating to any part of the world."

'Bayanihan'

The *parol* festival also gave meaning to the *bayanihan*, a Filipino value of cooperation. "*Bayanihan* is foreign to those who are non-Filipinos and even Filipino-Americans," said Bernadette Borja-Sy, FADF executive director.

Canlas said the festival nurtured the cooperative spirit among Filipino-American youth living amid an individualistic culture.

Youth organizations in the Peace City College were activated. Some people weary of self-serving causes found a common ground to share resources, viewing the *parol* festival as an event that transcended persons and social classes.

Paule-Marie Tenchavez, the festival's artistic director, said children benefited from the event's activities. The workshops gathered more than 1,000 participants, mostly children, who learned some aspects of the culture of their elders.

"The workshops were not intimidating for the adults and young people who worked together. The parents were not anymore familiar with the craft. So were the children who never grew up in the Philippines," said Tenchavez.

"It was a family strengthening activity," she said.

Filipino veterans of World War II also went to the FADF's center at Mint Mall to help make lanterns.

Since the workshops were held without the atmosphere of a competition, the younger participants were encouraged to work as a form of self-expression.

Pampanga Board Member Robert David, the maker of the two giant lanterns, introduced the concept of *bayanihan* through group work so the festival could also produce 500 pieces, by far the biggest number of *parol*, to match the number of San Fernando lanterns sent on the request of Pampanga Archbishop Paciano Aniceto. The bishop visited San Francisco in July.

FILIPINO-AMERICANS admire the giant Philippine lantern displayed at the St. Patrick's Church in San Francisco, California. M.C. CANLAS

Food fest

Tenchavez, an interior architect of Design Studios, said at least 38 pieces crafted during the workshops went on exhibit at the Asian Art Museum's Samsung Hall for almost two weeks.

In a sense, the festival scored another first.

It was also a showcase of Filipino culinary art. Canlas said "The Taste of Christmas" food fest became the Filipino community's representation of *Noche Buena*, the most meaningful feast of the year, and helped improve how they looked at Filipino cuisine.

The active participants in this festival were restaurants, such as the Mango Bay, Turo-Turo, Andrea Food and Red Ribbon.

Tenchavez said that even those in the American community wanted to take part in next year's festival.

"At first, *parol* to them sounded like 'parole.' 'What's that?' was a frequent question. Initially, we introduced the image of the star, calling it a Christmas lantern. Eventually we reverted to parol, the generic term, when our American friends became familiar with the symbol," she said.

What she could not forget was the sense of surprise and pride among the Filipinos.

"They asked, '*Tayo ba ito?*' They admitted to having goose bumps on the festival night because this was the first time they saw many lanterns of all sorts in San Francisco," Tenchavez said.

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The lanterns were made in October in lantern-making workshops participated in by Filipino parents and their children, either raised or born in the United States.

First in US

The two giant lanterns and their smaller counterparts were the top attractions in the San Francisco Parol Festival, the first of such held in the US, according to Canlas, a cultural historian and the community strategist of the Filipino American Development Foundation.

The FADF, the St. Patrick's Parish and the Bay Area Pampanga Organization (Bapo) began the festival on Dec. 15, the start of the nine-day Misa de Gallo in San Francisco, where about 50,000 mostly Catholic Filipinos reside.

The event was actually, in Canlas' words, a "synergy" of the parish's desire to celebrate the Filipino Christmas tradition, the FADF's search for an appropriate lighting ceremony for the launch of its Bayanihan Community Center, and the Bapo's advocacy of Kapampangan and Filipino culture.

The parade of 500 lanterns from Mission Street to 6th and 3rd Streets down to St. Patrick's Church, with children either holding lanterns or rattling noisemakers made of bottle caps, looked like modest versions of lantern festivals held in San Fernando (the annual Ligligan Parol or the giant lantern festival) and at the University of the Philippines' Diliman campus.

But Canlas said one good, likely lasting result emerged from the record-making festival and the merriment from having a first taste of Pinoy Christmas away from one's native land.

He said the festival fostered a spirit of unity, which is being harnessed to strengthen the bond among Filipino families and communities in the Bay Area.

"(The festival) is not only to make our presence felt as Filipinos in the Bay Area but also to have the whole community think and move as one," said Msgr. Fred Al. Bitanga, pastor of the St. Patrick's Church.

Bitanga, who administers to thousands of overseas Filipino workers in the city with the assistance of Fr. Elmer Magat and Fr. Ray Reyes, said many have easily identified with the *parol* because it has become "also the symbol of every Filipino's dream to reach out his dream of finding a greener pasture for his family in migrating to any part of the world."

'Bayanihan'

The *parol* festival also gave meaning to the *bayanihan*, a Filipino value of cooperation. "*Bayanihan* is foreign to those who are non-Filipinos and even Filipino-Americans," said Bernadette Borja-Sy, FADF executive director.

Canlas said the festival nurtured the cooperative spirit among Filipino-American youth living amid an individualistic culture.

Youth organizations in the Peace City College were activated. Some people weary of self-serving causes found a common ground to share resources, viewing the *parol* festival as an event that transcended persons and social classes.

Paule-Marie Tenchavez, the festival's artistic director, said children benefited from the event's activities. The workshops gathered more than 1,000 participants, mostly children, who learned some aspects of the culture of their elders.

"The workshops were not intimidating for the adults and young people who worked together. The parents were not anymore familiar with the craft. So were the children who never grew up in the Philippines," said Tenchavez.

"It was a family strengthening activity," she said.

Filipino veterans of World War II also went to the FADF's center at Mint Mall to help make lanterns.

Since the workshops were held without the atmosphere of a competition, the younger participants were encouraged to work as a form of self-expression.

Pampanga Board Member Robert David, the maker of the two giant lanterns, introduced the concept of *bayanihan* through group work so the festival could also produce 500 pieces, by far the biggest number of *parol*, to match the number of San Fernando lanterns sent on the request of Pampanga Archbishop Paciano Aniceto. The bishop visited San Francisco in July.

Food fest

Tenchavez, an interior architect of Design Studios, said at least 38 pieces crafted during the workshops went on exhibit at the Asian Art Museum's Samsung Hall for almost two weeks.

In a sense, the festival scored another first.

It was also a showcase of Filipino culinary art. Canlas said "The Taste of Christmas" food fest became the Filipino community's representation of *Noche Buena*, the most meaningful feast of the year, and helped improve how they looked at Filipino cuisine.

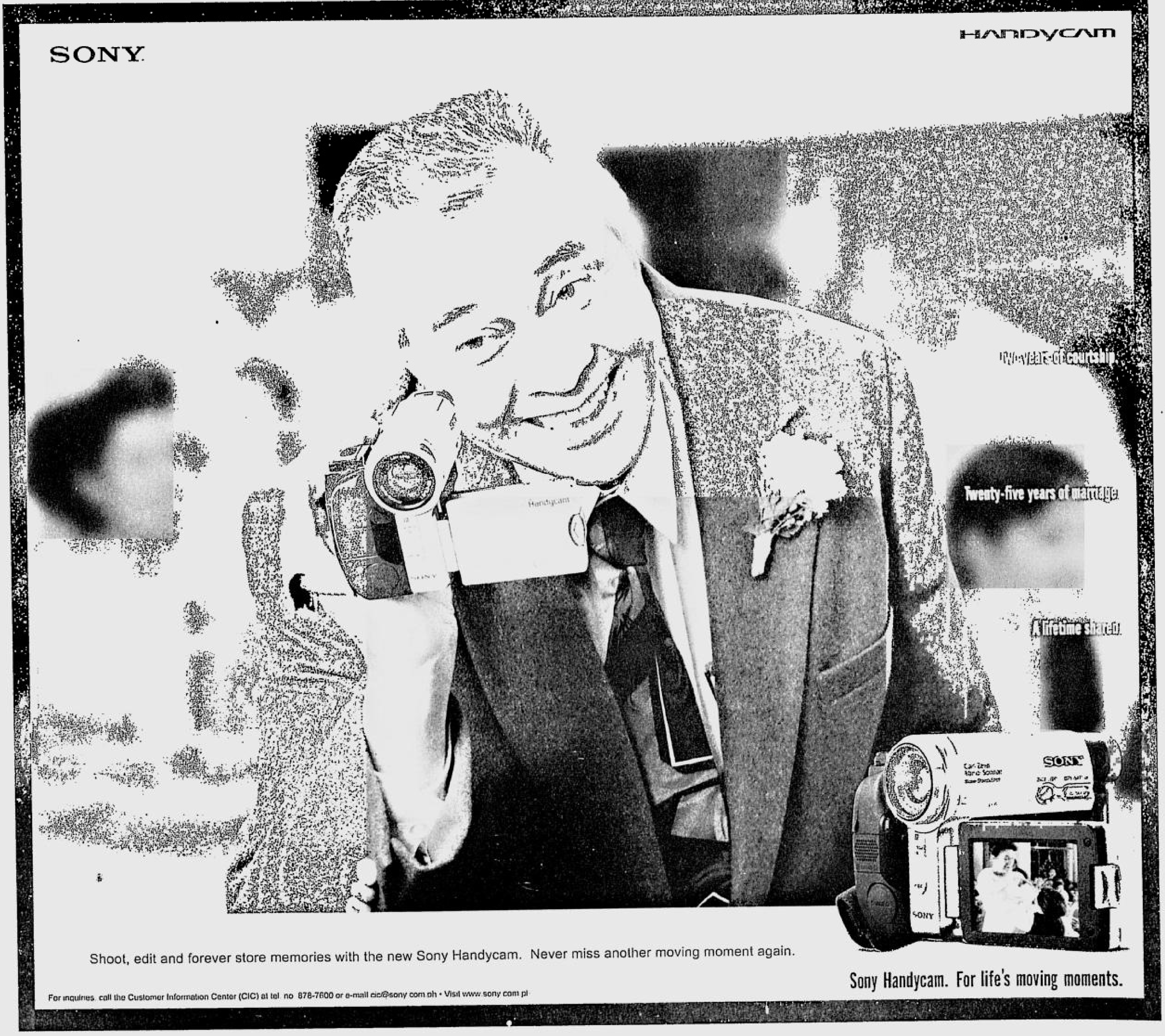
The active participants in this festival were restaurants, such as the Mango Bay, Turo-Turo, Andrea Food and Red Ribbon.

Tenchavez said that even those in the American community wanted to take part in next year's festival.

"At first, *parol* to them sounded like 'parole.' 'What's that?' was a frequent question. Initially, we introduced the image of the star, calling it a Christmas lantern. Eventually we reverted to parol, the generic term, when our American friends became familiar with the symbol," she said.

What she could not forget was the sense of surprise and pride among the Filipinos.

"They asked, '*Tayo ba ito?*' They admitted to having goose bumps on the festival night because this was the first time they saw many lanterns of all sorts in San Francisco," Tenchavez said.



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Star power

EDITORIAL

IF politics is the art of compromise, Filipinos have honed it to perfection. In the quest for electoral victory—especially to capture the highest prize, which is the presidency—nothing, not even principle, is allowed to stand in the way.

The principal opposition coalition was first to demonstrate this total absence of principle when it cobbled together a national ticket composed of men and women who took opposite sides in the historic impeachment trial of then President Joseph Estrada. On the one hand, there were Senators Loren Legarda, opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.'s running mate, and Aquilino Pimentel Jr., as well as Ernesto Herrera, and on the other, there were Sen. John Osmeña and former Senators Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Juan Ponce Enrile and Francisco Tatad. Dismayed by Poe's decision to pick Legarda, two of Estrada's fiercest defenders—Osmeña and Santiago—left in a huff, with the latter saying she could not abide the company of people who had violated the rule of law by helping oust Estrada from the presidency.

But if that sounded like a principled stand, look where the two are now. Osmeña immediately joined the team of President Macapagal-Arroyo, while Santiago is hovering near the door, which the administration has been keeping wide open, waiting for we don't know what. Both could not have missed the irony of making common cause with an administration that was installed by their foes, but as they themselves have admitted, their chances of winning are much improved by it.

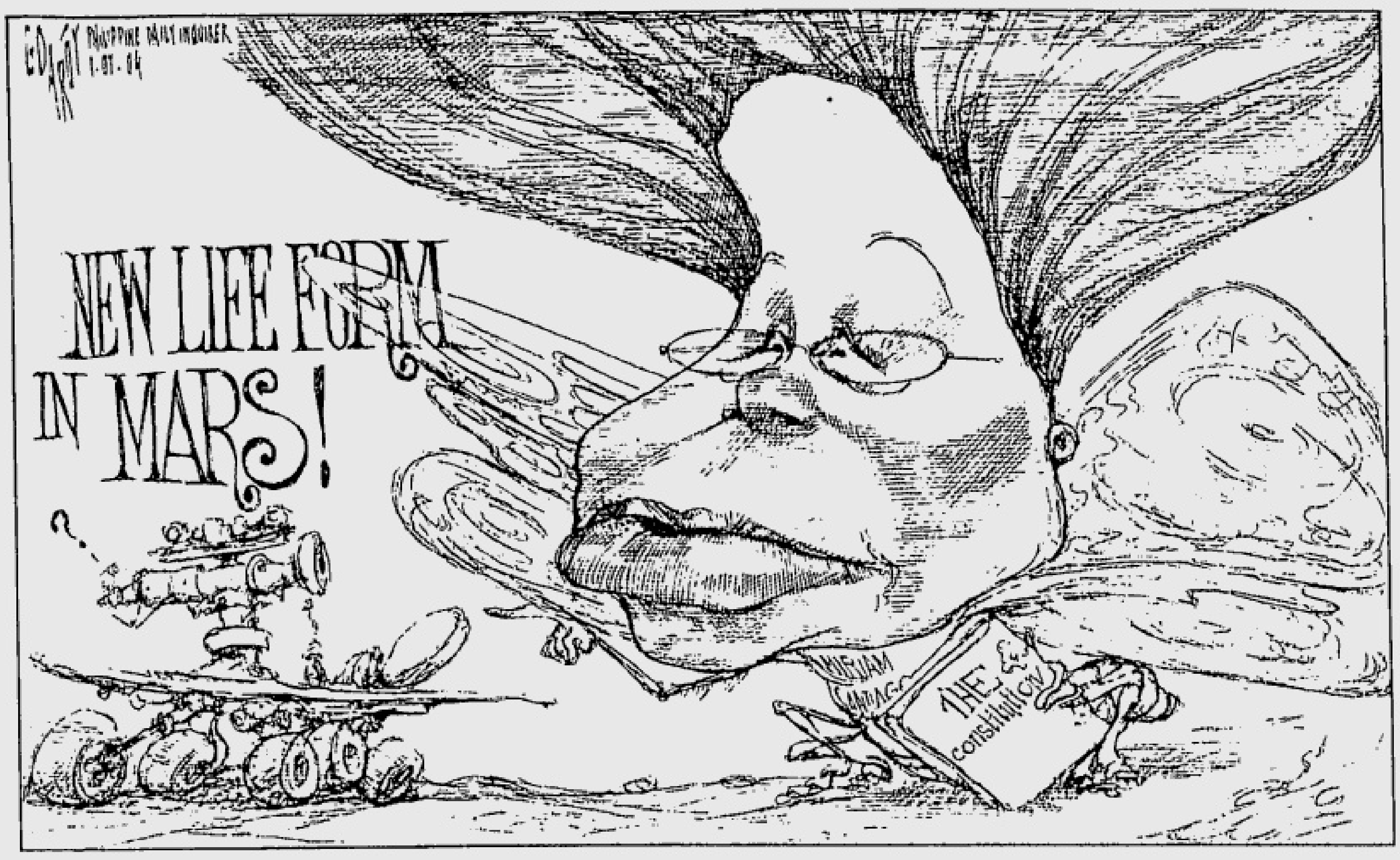
It is a glaring contradiction that the administration is apparently willing to live with. But then it is not the first by any means. In this political season, the administration has more often than not, said one thing and done exactly the opposite thing.

From the beginning, the administration Lakas-CMD has tried to sell a full term for Ms Macapagal on the basis of her experience not just in public service in general but in actually running the government as President. No doubt, training, experience and competence are essential for governing a nation, particularly one facing so many problems like ours. So what is Sen. Noli de Castro doing in her ticket? His competence obviously lies in broadcasting, not governance, as his two and a half years of unremarkable service in the Senate have shown.

It is hardly reassuring to think that the vice president is there merely as a spare tire, unless one can say with complete certainty that the president will serve a full term. The Constitution assumes otherwise, and that is why it calls for the election of a vice president. If the administration believes the ship of state should be put in expert hands, why is it pushing for someone of doubtful competence to be second in command? With her choice of a running mate, Ms Macapagal threw away her strongest campaign pitch.

It isn't only De Castro who makes any claims about "*karanasan*" (experience) in the administration ticket sound hollow and even hypocritical. What, for instance, is Pia Cayetano's experience in public service? Lito Lapid and Bong Revilla may have served as governor, but there are scores of others who probably did much better as local government executives and they didn't merit even fleeting consideration as senatorial candidates. And there's Sen. Robert Jaworski, who after almost six years in office has yet to prove that he deserves to be paid even a tiny fraction of what he earns as a legislator. Jaworski and his father-in-law, Sen. Ramon Revilla, would be hard put to mention any significant piece of legislation they shepherded through Congress during their combined 18 years in office. Why do Lakas and the administration deem it vital to keep in the Senate members of a political clan whose tenures have been unmarred by achievement?

There can only be one reason for putting together such a sorry lot of senatorial candidates: With an action star facing her, Ms Macapagal needs marquee candidates to attract crowds during the campaign and possibly bring in the votes come election day. The Lakas strategy is obviously to fight star power with star power. And with De Castro from media, Jaworski from sports and Lapid and Revilla from the movies, Lakas promises to give Poe and his team of aging *trapos* and children of disgraced presidents a run for their money. Even the short-hand for the Lakas-led coalition—K-4—has show biz written all over it. But if the President wants to go show biz, can someone from show biz be faulted for wishing to be president?



JDV can't change the Charter all by himself

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

WAIT a minute, not so fast! Speaker Jose de Venecia cannot change the Constitution all by himself. I say this because JDV has announced that President Macapagal-Arroyo has agreed to step down in 2007, after serving only half of a new six-year term. She would be the transition president in a shift to a parliamentary system of government. She has agreed to this, he said.

In the first place, the people will elect in May a president for a six-year term. That's what the Constitution says. Even if GMA agrees to it, she and JDV cannot shorten the term to three years and shift to a parliamentary system just so JDV can be prime minister. In the second place, GMA will agree to anything just so she will be reelected. In the third place, even if she agrees now, she can always change her mind later, like her promise not to run again for president. And in the fourth place, she will have to win first before she can step down in 2007, which is a very, very long shot.

Which gives us one more important reason why she should fade away gracefully. Because if she is reelected, she and JDV would monkey around with our Constitution like it is their own private toy.

Note that JDV and GMA don't even mention the sovereign people who have the sole authority to approve changes in the Constitution. They take the people for granted, assuming that whatever JDV wants, the people get. Any change in the Charter will first have to be ratified by the people before it can take effect. If they don't, then JDV will remain a frustrated prime minister. But the two of them don't even consider that. They just assume that GMA will abort her new term and shift to a parliamentary system—no ifs, ands or buts.

Before a president can agree to shorten her term and shift to a new system of government, the Charter must first be amended, not after. The amendments must be made by a constitutional convention because the people don't trust a constituent assembly composed only of legislators. The amendments must be submitted to the people for ratification in a plebiscite. Delegates to the convention will have to be elected; the convention itself will take many months to complete its job; and the plebiscite itself will take more time to prepare and hold. How can we do all that to authorize a new three-year term for the president before the May elections which is only five months away?

JDV should face reality and stop dreaming of the prime ministership. A shift to the parliamentary system is already lost, at least for now.

* * *

Why does JDV so desperately want a parliamentary government? Because that is the only way he can become the chief executive of the Philippines. He knows he can never be president. He tried once but was defeated miserably, although his running mate (GMA) won by a landslide. If it is any consolation, Philippine history is against both JDV and GMA. No Speaker of the House has been elected president of the nation, and no president has ever been reelected except Marcos—and look what happened to him.

In a parliamentary system, the prime minister, who is the chief executive, is elected from among the members of parliament, who are elected by district, like the present congressmen. The future prime minister doesn't have to campaign nationwide but only in his district.

In a parliamentary system, the party with the most members elects the prime minister. If no one party has a clear majority, the parties form a coalition and divide the spoils of victory. Forming coalitions and seducing legislators are the expertise of JDV. He will almost surely win in his district and as prime minister in parliament, considering his genius at seduction. Thus, it will not be the people who would choose the person who would rule them but the exclusive and privileged clique in parliament—which is just another name for the present House of Representatives.

If you think the present House is wasteful, abusive and graft-ridden, wait until we have a parliament. In the first place, the present congressmen will almost surely be the denizens of the new parliament—so the bad habits will remain—only worse.

The Cabinet members will also come from the ranks of the members of parliament. So the legislature and the executive department will be as one, under the control of the party in power. The judiciary will also be under the control of the majority party, so there are no checks and balances. The majority party will be the new dictator, except that it is not only one Ali Baba but much more than 40 thieves who would rob the people blind.

Pro-parliamentary people claim that in a unicameral legislature, lawmaking would be faster because there would be no Senate to delay the bills passed by parliament. In the first place, the Senate was put in a presidential system precisely to prevent the House railroad from running too fast. Can you imagine all the foolish bills passed by the House that would have become laws had there been no Senate to check them? Fast is not necessarily better. In the second place, we already have too many laws—we don't need any more. There are so many, even lawyers, judges and justices, and the legislators themselves, cannot keep track of them, much less the ordinary citizens who end up unknowingly violating many of these laws. And in the third place, the government doesn't implement many of the laws anyway, so why bother to legislate more?

* * *

TODAY'S JOKE: Do you realize that we may have just celebrated our last Feast of the Three Kings? Next year, we may have a Fourth King.

Tragedy, farce

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

IT'S not just the peso that has depreciated tremendously over the last four decades, politics has done so as well. Electoral politics most of all. A cursory look at politics before martial law and after February 1986 shows the extent of the plunge, as steep as the peso's fall from a little over P3 to the dollar in 1970 to today's more than P55 to the dollar. Before 1970, which ushered the regime of the floating rate, the exchange rate was P2 to the dollar. Them were the days.

One of the clearest signs of the cheapening of electoral politics I saw last week in this paper's interview with Bong Revilla. He was running for senator this May, Revilla said, but would not abandon the movies if he won. The movies were his bread and butter, he said, so he would continue to make them while holding public office. Public office did not particularly pay well, he said, and if you were determined to be honest, which he said he was, you could not depend on it for your upkeep. So long as you did your job as an elective official well, he said, he saw no reason why a movie-star-turned-politician could not have one foot in the Senate and another in the silver screen. One persona as Senator Revilla and another as Captain Barbell.

Before martial law, nobody would even have thought to say that. Well, before martial law, movie stars did not naturally think to run for public office—there was a clear line of demarcation between the movies and real life, lawmaking and mythmaking. It doesn't just do a disservice to public office, it does a disservice to movies as well. I am not particularly surprised that only stars of action movies and comedies like going into politics. The more serious people in show biz have better things to do than run for public office, which is to make better movies. The only exception I know is Vilma Santos. I don't know that her stint as mayor of Lipa has been a gain for politics, but it has obviously been a loss for the movies.

But can you have a more contemptuous attitude toward public office than to treat it as just another job, not unlike being a salesclerk in SM that you can leave after your stipulated time? Or more than just another job, a sideline, as Revilla's remark about it not being bread and butter suggests? Revilla must imagine himself so indispensable we have no choice but to share his time as senator with his leading ladies as actor. Surely this country has no lack of people, particularly the youth, who want to be honest but find the financial rewards of a mayor or congressman or senator more than sufficient for his needs?

But what takes the cake is when you apply Bong Revilla's proposition to everybody else. What applies to him can most certainly apply to Fernando Poe Jr. and Noli de Castro, too. The salary and emoluments of a president and vice president cannot possibly compare with the profits to be made from producing, directing and acting in a movie and the profits to be made from producing, directing and acting in an ABS-CBN show. What may we expect then, that as FPJ tries to be the scourge of kidnappers and murderers in real life, he continues to be the scourge of *aswangs* and villains in the movies? What may we expect then, that as De Castro serves as vice president, he acts as talk show host interviewing himself in his capacity as vice president?

Yet another clear sign of the plunge in standards is the monumental decline of the importance of keeping one's word. Electoral politics of course is the least given to keeping one's word, or anyone seriously expecting it. The joke that a candidate is very promising because he promises and promises is not altogether a joke. Elections are a prime venue for making promises, which are seldom met.

But before martial law, people at least took the trouble of trying to lie convincingly, or at least of making their promises sufficiently vague to enable them to find a loophole afterward. Today, people just lie blatantly. This isn't just being done by obscure political figures, this is being done by prominent ones.

The most prominent of them is of course Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the President herself. She not only said she wouldn't run in the most iron-clad terms, she offered the most ironclad reasons for it. If she ran, she said, this country would never be united. This was so because she herself was the basis of disunity, or at least one of them, as she put it. Yet she ran anyway.

Miriam Defensor-Santiago is the other one. Wasn't it only a month ago when she swore by the grave of her dead son she would forswear politics forever? Her situation was not unlike GMA's when she made that vow. It seemed pretty much *force majeure*. I personally thought her son's suicide made her decision completely superfluous, it was a career-buster. The question everybody naturally stood to ask was, if you can't run a household sufficiently well to prevent your children from feeling they have precious little to live for, how can you do so a country and its citizens? Or so it seemed from where I stood. But this country offers no end of surprises, often nasty ones.

I was one of those who saw her weeping copious tears on TV, and my heart bled for her, being a parent myself and appreciating the depth of the loss of a child particularly in that way. But I was vastly irritated when she kept talking more about herself than about her kid in an interview with a TV program, which gave me a glimpse of why that tragedy happened. This person is self-absorbed beyond belief. Barely had her tears dried than there she was, proclaiming her decision to run anyway. And with GMA yet. Well, birds of a feather, as they say.

Politics before martial law was tragedy. Today's is, most unforgivably, farce.

Can US and Iran kiss and make up?

FEATURE

Paul Hughes

TEHRAN—Are the United States and Iran just flirting, or are they serious about patching up a relationship that ended in separation 24 years ago?

The resumption of an official US-Iran dialogue on specific issues, broken off by Washington last May, is probably the least that can be expected after the two arch-foes came together to help victims of the devastating Bam earthquake.

But a Washington proposal for a first public official visit to Iran by a senior US delegation for over 20 years looks like a non-starter and the prospect of restoring full ties severed by Washington in 1980 remains remote, analysts said.

"Iran-US relations are like two windows facing one another," said a political analyst who declined to be named.

"Normally when one opens, the other is closed. Right now, both windows are ajar, but they're a long way from fully open." A senior European diplomat in Tehran said Bam offered the two countries a chance to talk about long-standing problems.

"But let's not forget that the problems haven't changed." Efforts by moderate President Mohammad Khatami's reformist government to promote democracy inside the Islamic Republic and improve its relations with the West have been largely stymied by religious hardliners who control key levers of power such as the courts, military and constitutional oversight bodies.

Influential former President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said on Thursday US relief aid for Bam and a limited sanctions waiver to speed donations may ease decades of mistrust.

Khatami's brother went further, saying the US response to Bam may lead to unspecified reciprocal measures.

"We're evaluating the US government's positive behavior and I'm sure that goodwill will be answered with goodwill," deputy parliament speaker Mohammad Reza Khatami told Reuters.

US officials have said they may re-start talks with Iran held in Geneva in the run-up to wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Bush administration's Iran policy for the last two years has been to reach out a friendly hand to the Iranian people while snubbing the regime

Washington halted the talks after accusing Tehran of harboring al-Qaida members behind bomb attacks in Saudi Arabia in May.

Friday's Washington Post reported that the United States approached Iran on Tuesday about sending a high-level humanitarian mission headed by Senator Elizabeth Dole and including an unspecified relative of President George W. Bush.

But informed sources in Tehran said Iran was about to reject the offer, which diplomats said was a step too far at this stage.

"The tricky thing is to carefully calibrate these moves," one Western diplomat said.

"You can't rush because that would scare hardliners in both countries who oppose any rapprochement. But you can't go too slow either because then you lose the momentum provided by Bam."

While Bam provided the opportunity, it was Iran's decision last October to agree to snap inspections of its nuclear plants that sparked a change of thinking in Washington, analysts said.

The emergence of Supreme National Security Council chief Hassan Rohani—a moderate conservative said to have close ties to Rafsanjani—as the man who brokered the nuclear deal with Britain, Germany and France, "was a real eye-opener for Washington," the European diplomat said.

Unlike Libya, hailed by Washington last month for agreeing to scrap its nuclear weapons programme, Iran's complex political structure in which unelected hardliners wield far more power than the elected reformist government has meant there was no single decision-maker like Libya's Muammar Gaddafi to deal with.

"The Bush administration's Iran policy for the last two years has been to reach out a friendly hand to the Iranian people while snubbing the regime," said the senior political analyst.

"Last year they were saying that Iran's clerics were like a house of cards ready to fall, but that's just not true and now they're wondering whether they've found an authoritative counterpart to deal with on matters of fundamental importance."

The Libya model may be appealing to Iran's leadership too, particularly if it led to a removal of damaging US economic sanctions and a tacit agreement by Washington to allow Iran to run its internal affairs as it sees fit.

That could spell the end of the road for Khatami's reformists and may be unpalatable for Western nations concerned about Iran's human rights record. But Washington is not about to ease up pressure on Iran.

Bush—who in 2002 called Iran part of an "axis of evil"—on Thursday praised its willingness to allow in US humanitarian flights but urged Tehran to abandon nuclear weapons and turn over suspected al-Qaida militants.

The White House also wants Tehran to stop backing Palestinian militants who attack Israel and support the transition to democracy in Iraq.

"Put all these elements together and it certainly doesn't look like a smooth scenario to me," said the analyst.

Reuters

Scrambled eggs

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IT'S like watching scrambled eggs cooking, this process of coming up with senatorial lineups as well as presidential-vice-presidential teams in preparation for the May 2004 polls.

The omelettes on the political burners make for an interesting mix of recipes, including farm-fresh eggs as well as the cracked, spoiled and rotten. There are eggs from all sorts of species: lame ducks and dodos, spring chickens, turkeys and dinosaurs, birds of a feather as well as perpetually fighting cocks, doves of peace, vultures, birds of prey, poultry fattened on synthetic hormones and native "self-supporting" chickens scratching for food from the bare earth.

I'm sure that if a foreign political scientist who comes for a visit only periodically were to drop in now and study the lay of the land, he or she would end up dazed and confused. Political loyalties and ideological classifications, once quite clear and delineated in the wake of Edsa II and III, are now blurred. How is it that Miriam has ended up on the same side as Gloria Labandera? And why has the Crying Lady crossed the divide to join the Dancing Lady, who by the way has chosen to be a wallflower this time?

The men have proven just as confused and confusing, and just as agile leaping across boundaries and jumping through hoops. Sen. Ernesto Herrera, who signed the impeachment complaint against former President Estrada, is now part of the senatorial ticket of the coalition united under Estrada. Sen. John Osmeña, who was one of Estrada's defenders in the impeachment hearing, and former senator and Erap defense secretary Orly Mercado are now part of the administration "K-4" lineup. And Sen. Nene Pimentel, who has undergone so many political permutations he himself seems confused about where he stands, will find himself sharing the campaign stage with former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, who as martial law defense chief was responsible for arresting and detaining Pimentel and then as senatorial candidate was the chief suspect in the "*dagdag-bawas*" scam that Pimentel believes cheated him and the Filipino voters.

* * *

PERHAPS the most interesting phenomenon of this campaign season is the re-emergence in the public eye of Miriam Defensor-Santiago. Until she stepped out of her cocoon of retirement and grief, we didn't realize how much we missed Miriam and her motormouth. All by her lonesome she has already raised the quality of sound bites and the level of wit in otherwise dreary campaign rhetoric.

Actually, Miriam's resurrection began, ironically, with the death of her younger son, earning the public's sympathy and compassion with her tearful admission that her son had indeed committed suicide over a failing grade in his law studies. Briefly, she allowed her invincible know-it-all mask to crack, and the people caught a glimpse of Miriam as mother, wife and vulnerable human being.

One thing puzzles me, though, about Miriam's return to the spotlight and that is her stated reason for re-entering the field of politics which she once spurned. Soon after her son's death, she announced that she was renouncing public service because after the loss of her child she needed time to retreat and reflect. But now it's the other way around. After her defeat in the 2001 polls, she said, she had planned to travel abroad with her late son where he would study and she would teach. But with his death, she said, she now needs something to distract her from her grief and that something is a run for the Senate.

Perhaps politics, once it enters your bloodstream, is an addiction difficult to shake off.

* * *

ISN'T it interesting how everyone, from Ping Lacson to the Da King to even Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo seems to be in agreement on one thing, the need to shift to the parliamentary system?

These presidential candidates, with the possible exception of Raul Roco whom I haven't heard say anything on the matter, are now all saying that once they win, they will begin the process toward converting the House of Representatives into a constituent assembly to amend the Constitution primarily to shift the form of government from presidential to parliamentary, and adopt a federal system.

While nobody was looking, it seems that changing the form and system of government has become a fait accompli, if any of its avowed champions prevails at the polls, that is.

How did the different candidates and the parties arrive at this position? Were constituents and party members even consulted? Are we voters going to, in effect, participate in a referendum on the Constitution without our knowing it?

* * *

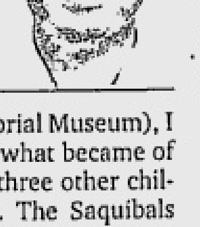
PROPONENTS of the federal system and of a parliamentary form of government can cite any number of sound reasons to support their arguments for such a basic, revolutionary change. And many of them sound reasonable and promise lasting solutions to persistent problems. A federal system, in particular, seems to hold out a lasting solution to the problem of separatism in Mindanao, meeting the Muslims' clamor for respect, equity and a measure of autonomy.

But however sound these arguments, they must be presented to the Filipino people in full transparency and openness. One cause of the lingering suspicions about Charter change is the fondness for skullduggery among its supporters, the penchant for shortcuts and sneaking up on the public, as in the present scenario.

Perhaps the leaders of voters' groups and organizers of citizens' meetings should include the question of Charter change, and views on federalism and a parliamentary system in their candidates' forums. I'd be interested to hear in detail why, all of a sudden, Gloria, Ping and Da King have found something to agree on.

Crime stories then and now

LOOKING BACK



Ambeth R. Ocampo

CRIME and all its lurid details never fail to get readers' attention. Tabloids and certain segments of the six o'clock TV news go one step further by providing us with a morbid type of entertainment. Mike Tan recently wrote a column on old issues of Tiktik magazine, comparing it with today's tabloids and finding nothing new except the dates and the names. Over the holidays I was also going through old newspapers and noted that what makes news today was also making news 40 years ago. Politics and sex-related crimes don't seem to have changed over time but certain cases really make you sit up in horror.

On Aug. 28, 1961 a different kind of murder was discovered on the second floor of an apartment in San Andres Bukid. Two children were found dead, murdered by their own parents. The victims were Corazon and Rosalinda Saquibal, the former was only 12, her sister 7 years old. Corazon was found in the bedroom lying face down with a crucifix rammed down her throat and a rosary in her right hand. Rosalinda was also found face down, on her head lay a framed picture of the Holy Family and in her cold hands a prayer book and a rosary. Garlic bulbs were strewn all over the place, some of the garlic stuffed into the mouths and ears of the victims. The bedroom wall and refrigerator were covered with pig-Latin phrases in India ink. These inscriptions were the type one found on *anting-anting*. For example the text on the freezer read: "*Sanctum Erga Tekel Mimi Espert Diablo Esperta Espertka Awolg Amen.*" The parents Fermin Saquibal, 41 years old, a driver, and Angustia de Leon, 35, seamstress, admitted strangling their daughters to death because they had allegedly turned into vampires!

Naturally, the couple were tried but were declared unfit for trial and committed to the National Mental Hospital. As I am only going through the newspapers in the Manila Times Library and Morgue (now in the Lopez Memorial Museum), I don't know the whole story and what became of the murderers. The couple had three other children who remained unharmed. The Saquibals had moved from their home in Baclaran, claiming it was full of "anitos," to an apartment in San Andres Bukid owned by a dentist named Dr. Virgilia Allado, who claimed she was their "spiritual adviser." Under police interrogation the Saquibals first claimed their daughters transformed from children into vampires, but later they claimed Dr. Allado had hypnotized them into thinking their daughters were vampires.

(In another newspaper report the children are supposed to have become werewolves.) When questioned by the police, Dr. Allado claimed she personally saw the children turn into vampires, yet she drops out of the news and doesn't seem to have been prosecuted.

Each semester I require my students to go to the library and read the newspaper that came out the day they were born. They are also asked to interview their parents and see what they remember of that day. Most students enjoy this simple exercise in being a historian, they come to terms with the past and often discover that the memories of their parents are often inaccurate. The students discover a world that is different—the peso dollar rate is unbelievable—and yet also familiar politics, crime and movies seem the same. Many students read the horoscope, look up the weather, survey the movie page and find excellent Philippine films like "Room 69" and "Gamitin Mo Ako." Other students complain that no great events occurred on the day of their birth, the day was "boring" in the sense that the news was ordinary. Going back and forth from present to the past is one way of finding a connection with history and understanding how the past influences the present.

The newspapers on the day of my birth were likewise uneventful but going a little bit further I found stories of *aswang*, vampires and werewolves from late August 1961 to December 1962. Most terrifying, of course, being the Saquibal case mentioned above that led to the deaths of two innocent children. I could not stop reading and asking myself what was the Philippines like in those times? Were people really that hysterical and superstitious? How could modern people in Manila even believe in vampires? Carolina Malay wrote some articles in December 1962 and traced the source of these stories to discover a hoax or, at least, a fine example of news garbled in transmission. Why did the vampire stories spread faster and wider than truth? In November 1962 policemen from Station 6 in Sampaloc apprehended a drunken woman who made a lot of noise and attracted a lot of attention. Jeepney drivers in the area made up a story of an *aswang* captured by Sampaloc police who came with the usual paraphernalia: blood-shot eyes, fangs and was busy devouring the better part of a child. Malay thus wrote:

"Next morning, the town was buzzing with gory stories. By that time, the drunk had staggered out of the police station with a splitting headache, probably unaware that she had been the object of morbid fascination the night before. What she probably wanted was just another drink. Not of a young child's blood either."

How is the historian to make sense of news like the above? Now, that's the tricky part.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Clock still ticking for victims of toxic waste

COMMENTARY

Ricardo S. Malay

IN THE BONHOMIE that oozed during President George Bush's Manila visit last October, not a word was breathed about the plight of the thousands of toxic waste victims in the former American military bases in Clark and Subic. It was a display of President Macapagal-Arroyo's mendicancy toward Washington that she toasted a man who waged a war of aggression against Iraq but failed to seek justice for her compatriots who continue to die and be afflicted with serious medical problems caused by the large-scale pollution left by the US military occupation.

America's toxic waste legacy has been widely documented in studies made in the Philippines and in America. According to the People's Task Force for Bases Clean-Up, at least a thousand deaths have been attributed to the hazardous materials left in the water, soil and buildings of the former military bases. 18,000 of 34,000 former workers in Subic are ill from exposure to asbestos and other toxic chemicals. Families that lived near and beside the rivers that flowed from Subic Bay are suffering from a range of medical disorders as a result of ingesting contaminants when they bathed, drank and swam in the waterways.

At the former Clark Air Base Command (Cabcom), the situation is no less grim. Hundreds of children living in the fringes of the facility who were conceived and born there suffer congenital heart failures and central nervous system disorders. Those who grew and lived within the area have been found to develop immune system ailments and are now suffering from various types of cancer, including leukemia.

In January 1992, the US General Accounting Office identified polychlorinated byphenyl (PCB) contaminants, lead and other toxic substances buried in landfills which leaked into the soil and groundwater of Cabcom. The same report pinpointed 28 potentially contaminated sites in Subic and another 28 potentially contaminated training areas and ranges used by naval forces. In an internal 1986 study, the US Inspector General admitted that the US government took advantage of the lax regulatory climate in the host country and ignored available methods for protecting the environment.

The response of the US government to the toxic waste problem is typical of the superpower's condescending arrogance. It claims no legal obligation to clean up its mess since neither party to the military bases agreement foresaw the consequences of storing toxic substances within the facilities. This frees it from picking up the tab for a cleanup and paying tort damages to the victims.

The US government should stop this cockamamie excuses.

It occupied and used Clark and Subic as a colonial sovereign for the first 48 years and as a privileged tenant for the next 46 years. It's beyond cavil that the US government bears the responsibility for undertaking an official survey of the disaster's extent and for rendering medical and financial assistance to the victims. The polluter should bear the cost of pollution.

As a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rio Declaration of Environment and Development, Washington should take a second look at one of its key provisions. It affirms that "States have the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other states or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction." It is instructive to note that the US government has the habit of riding roughshod over the United Nations where its interests collide with that of the world community. Remember how President Bush, with characteristic hauteur, ordered the Iraq invasion over the UN's objection to force a regime change in line with the neocon doctrine of military pre-emption?

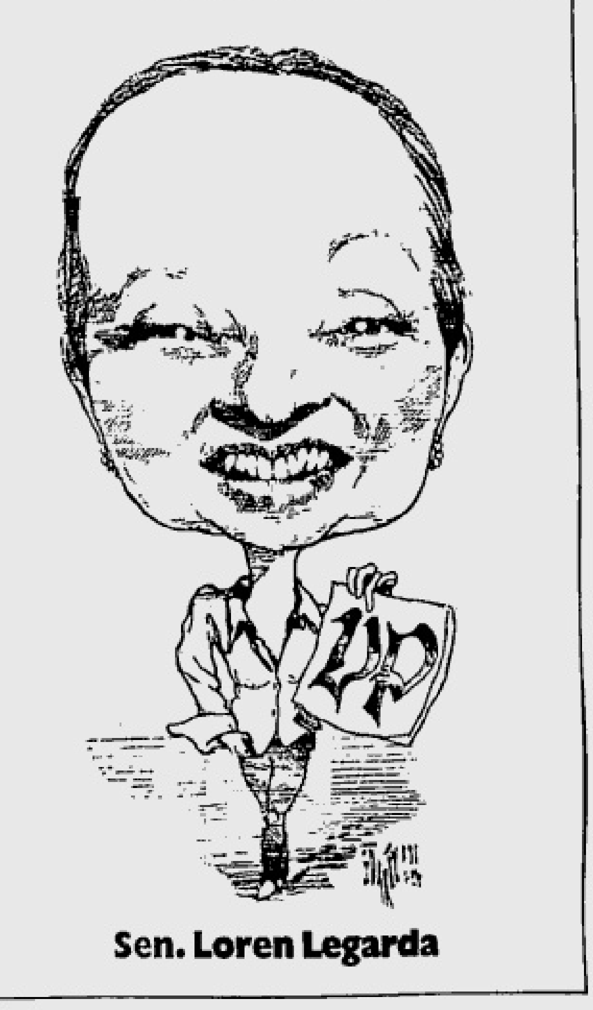
The toxic waste problem is the story of a people's quest for justice against a superpower as well as a fight for justice against their own government which tolerated the superpower's abusive disregard of conventional norms governing the use of their territories. But in general, this is also the story of the Filipino people whose environment is the bigger victim of the two countries' asymmetric relationship.

The Philippine government is no less complicit in the alliance to deny justice to the toxic waste victims. Staking out a narrow legal position, successive administrations have awkwardly claimed that the US government is beyond the reach and scope of Philippine courts. To say that the Macapagal government has no reason to rock the boat of RP-US relations, especially at a time when our bilateral focus should be on "fighting terrorism," plumbs a new dimension in subservience to a foreign government.

President Bush's Manila visit was another product of his spin-driven efforts seeking to portray the success of a global alliance against international terrorism. Maybe his stopover was a PR accomplishment in terms of diverting attention from his serial failures in Iraq. Perhaps now we can expect an increase in slightly-used accouterments thrown our away, thanks to our newly conferred status as a major non-Nato ally of America. But for the Filipino people, the Bush visit will be remembered as President Macapagal's betrayal of the innocent victims, both human and environmental, of a colonial relationship with the world's unsurpassed hegemonic nation.

Ricardo S. Malay occasionally writes commentary pieces.

IN THE NEWS



Sen. Loren Legarda

Disagreeing with Joaquin on population issue

LETTERS

NICK Joaquin's article last Dec. 17, 2003 on the Church's baneful role in the worsening population problem of the country hasn't gotten any reactions so far. And I'm wondering why. Does everybody agree with what he says? Or nobody?

I, for one, certainly don't. And I'd like to register my disagreement for what it is worth. I do so not as one of the "Roman honchos" and "divine ones" whom he scathingly castigates but as an ordinary citizen who is concerned about our burgeoning population, but whose common sense is nonetheless offended by the logic (or the lack of it) of Joaquin's article. Let me focus on just these three things:

First, Joaquin portrays the Church (I guess he means us bishops) as among the worst opponents of family planning. Yet, he repeatedly makes the point that it is totally powerless and inconsequential in the decisions couples make about the number of their children. The Church is ineffective, yet it is at the same time effective in the worst way, with regard to one and the same thing, family planning? The reasoning escapes me.

Secondly, he shows how politicians continue to believe in the discarded myth of Church power and hence will not touch population questions for fear of what churchmen would do against them, come election time. But, if as he takes pains to point out, the Church despite its fulminations, has no real influence in determining the outcome of elections, why blame it if politicians are stupid enough to continue fearing what most everybody knows amounts to the harmless noises of a windbag of a Church?

And lastly, I believe Joaquin would have written a better piece of literature if he had zeroed in on this one little fact: traditional politicians make decisions from pure expediency—they go mainly for what they believe will advance their careers. Hence, what the Church says on moral questions is agreed or disagreed with according to that one, sole principle. A recent case in point: the President bows to the Church on this issue of family planning but not on that of the death penalty. But I guess everybody knows and, worse, accepts the fact that self-interest is only too often the guiding principle in Philippine politics—and writing about that doesn't titillate as much as claiming that an effete Church is one of the worst enemies of family planning.

—FRANCISCO F. CLAVER, S.J.,
bishop, Bontoc-Lagawe,
Apostolic Vicariate
of Bontoc-Lagawe, Sta. Rita
Catholic Mission,
2616 Bontoc, Mountain Province

To eradicate illegal fishing

THIS refers to Chito Fuentes' article (PDI, 12/11/03, P. 17) on the Kahugpongan sa mga Mananagat sa Danajon (Kamada) urging the Bohol governor to stop illegal fishing.

The province of Bohol recently garnered the Galing Pook award for its Coastal Law Enforcement Council (CLEC) effort on fisheries law enforcement. The effort of the CLEC is indeed noteworthy in mitigating the destructive and irreversible impact of illegal fishing practices in Bohol. In fact, its effort helped in minimizing illegal fishing in the area, especially the operation of big commercial fishing boats in municipal waters.

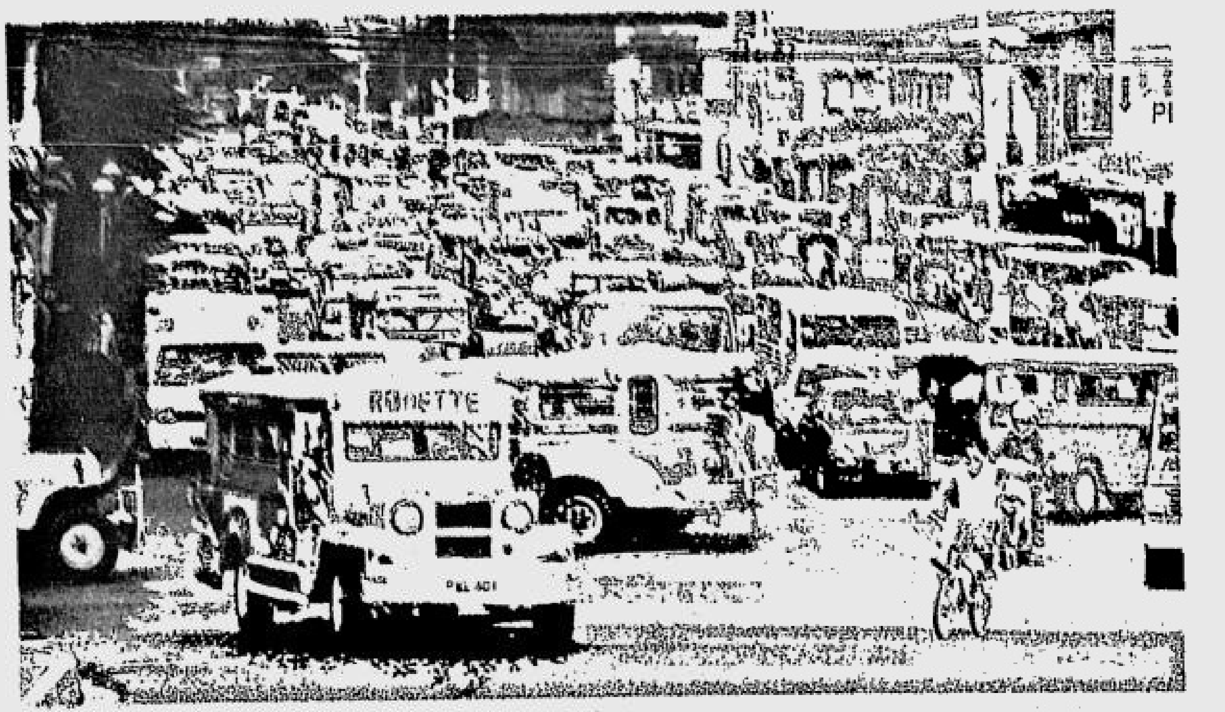
However, most of illegal fishers are just watching when the CLEC operates in the area. Having a solid network among them, illegal fishers engage in a cat-and-mouse tactic. When the CLEC is out of site, illegal fishers operate in the area.

This is where Kamada wanted to help the province. Being in the area all the time, it can't be the "eyes" and "ears" of the council. Being fishers using legal fishing methods, they are the ones most affected by illegal fishing.

The recent consultation-dialogue with Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado hopefully should strengthen the ties between the province and Kamada, and beef up efforts in law enforcement. Kamada has submitted to the governor a list of fishers involved in illegal fishing practices, together with the names of their financiers.

The efforts of the Bohol provincial leaders and Kamada would go down the drain without the full support of the municipal officials. We are urging the town mayors within the Danajon Bank region (covering the provinces of Cebu, Southern Leyte and Leyte) to be genuinely committed to eradicating illegal fishing.

—ERWIN O. BRUNIO,
Project Seahorse Foundation for
Marine Conservation Inc.,
222 1st Street corner 4th Street,
Happy Valley Subdivision,
Barangay Guadalupe, Cebu City



Curbing reckless jeepney drivers

A WEEK ago, my father, a spry 80-year-old disposed to the various aches and pains of a man his age (save for his long battle with neuralgia), was okay. That day, he and my mother (who's 76) took the jeepney to Harrison Plaza for some Christmas shopping. On the way home, they decided not to walk the remaining three blocks down Park Avenue in Pasay City to where we live and took instead a Malibay-bound jeep.

Our street is a typical Pasay *esquenita*—O'Farrell (re-christened Offarel by some guy who makes street signs for Pasay). But since it was the access road from Park Avenue to City Hall and the Pasay City West High School, it is a busy corner. This is probably what has prompted some bright boys to place a rather high hump at that point. Well, as many jeepney drivers do, this one raced to the corner and took the hump with a big bump. My father banged his head on the roof and landed on his seat, rather badly I suppose. For now he has a compressed fracture on one of his thoracic vertebrae.

My mother had a few choice words for the driver who instead of apologizing, even laughed at what happened. They got off and the driver drove away scot-free. There is a barangay outpost at that corner (for Barangay 72, Zone 1) but the two were so shaken by what happened they just wanted to go home.

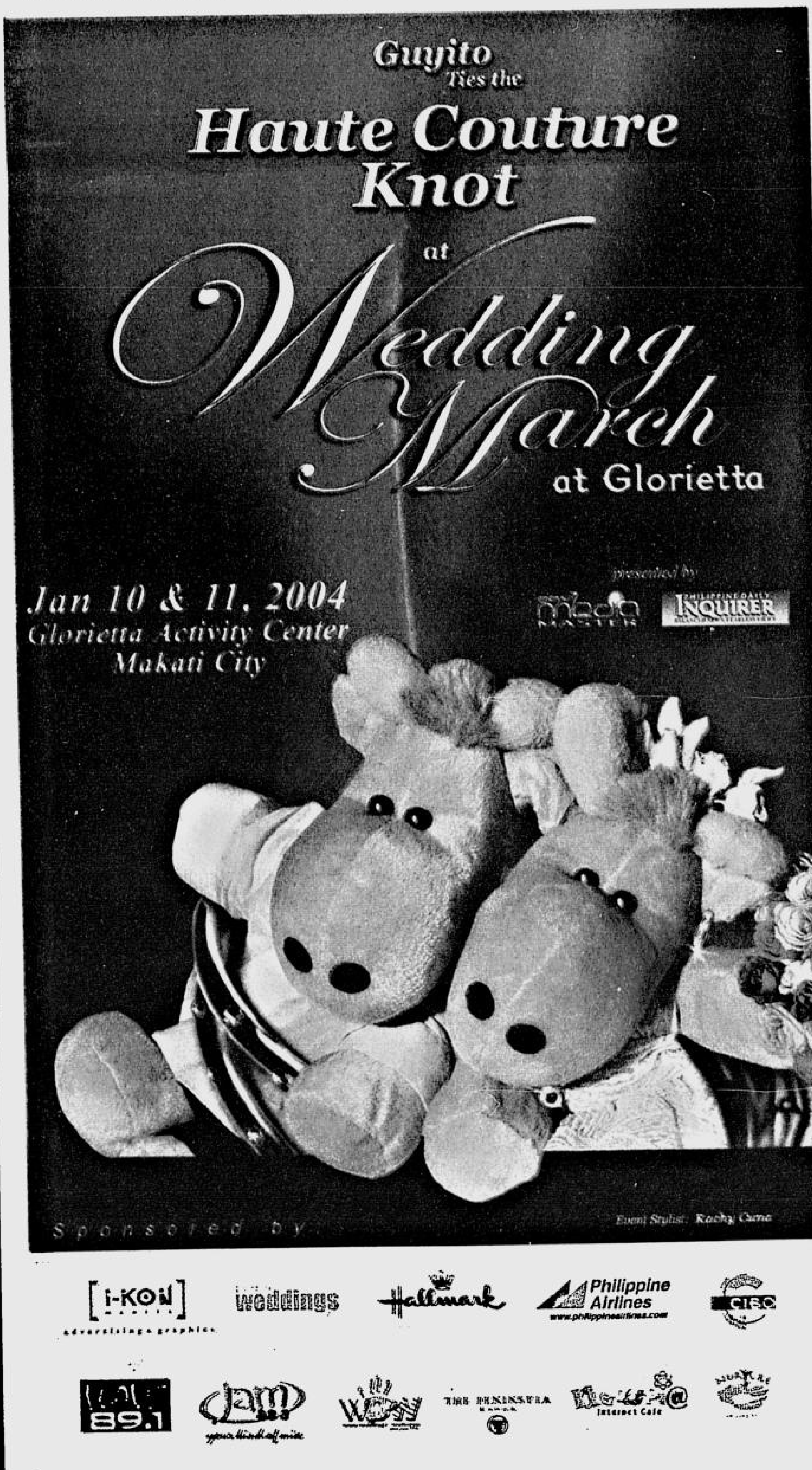
Jeepney, bus, taxi and tricycle drivers have their own operator and drivers' associations—a potent political force they have become. But what about the commuters who every day entrust life and limb to these so-called professional drivers? How many bus riders have been forced to get off at the top of a flyover? Or alight at the center island when they say "*sa tabi lang*"? How many have fallen off the *estribo* of jeepneys who cannot wait to speed off when passengers alight but think nothing of clogging a busy corner when they are picking up fares? How many have suffered bad bumps when riding tricycles and pedicabs because these are not properly equipped with shock absorbers?

For someone who takes public transportation every day, suffering through all these is only to be expected when one takes the least expensive means of moving around. Meanwhile, the so-called "professionals" speed their merry way around town with nary a thought about whom they may have hurt in the course of doing their "jobs." In fact, it is only right that they be sued for reckless imprudence and made to pay for their uncaring attitude toward the public they are supposed to serve.

Whose responsibility is it to educate the professional drivers? To whom shall people like my father address their grievances? Can we ever hope to discover who was responsible for the state he is in today? He was going to decorate our home for Christmas that afternoon. Today, he winces in pain with every movement. Today, he is forced to direct everything from the sidelines.

Meanwhile, that jeepney driver continues to imperil his passengers.

—JOSEPHINE C. ALINAS,
15 O'Farrell St., Pasay City



Device to help stop kidnapping

LAST Dec. 3, 2003, the anti-crime groups called on to seek help from the US Federal Bureau of Investigation to stamp out kidnapping.

Last Nov. 28, 2003, it was stated in the news that the government is putting up P300 million in reward money for a new legislative initiative to crush kidnap-for-ransom and other criminal syndicates and terrorist groups operating in the country. According to Speaker Jose de Venecia, the reward would be given to those who expose leaders or members of kidnap-for-ransom syndicates and terrorist groups.

In view of the escalating bank robberies and kidnap for ransom, I would like to ask President Macapagal-Arroyo and De Venecia to support my research in developing the prototype of a system that can deter bank robbery, car theft and kidnap for ransom.

I have been studying for a long time how bank robberies and kidnappings are executed and they have only one denominator. Stolen vehicles are used in all bank robberies and kidnappings.

Let's take a look at the case of Betti Chua Sy. The cars used were stolen from Bacolod.

If we have a system to detect early that a particular vehicle is stolen, we can stop the people inside and consequently the crime they are planning to execute. Imagine a system that would detect a stolen vehicle even before it enters the Makati business district. It can certainly prevent a bank robbery.

In the July 7, 2003 issue of Newsweek, the cover was about an invention that will change the world. Stephen Salter had a big plan. He talked of an invention that would control the weather. Most meteorologists dismissed Salter's invention out of hand. Even sympathetic scientists put odds at one in 10. Nevertheless, somebody was listening: the British government last year granted Salter 105,000 pounds to explore the potential of his invention.

It would be easier to detect a stolen vehicle than to control the weather. I just hope the government will listen.

I am the same person behind "Rescue 117," an anti-bus robbery system I developed with patent application No. 1-2003-00516. "Rescue 117" is currently being reviewed by the Department of Interior and Local Government.

—MARIONITO C. MARQUEZ,
Marilao, Bulacan,
mmarquez@bulacan.ph

Greater respect for judge in Mamburao 6 case

AS a lawyer for one of the Mamburao Six, I read with more than passing interest your account on them on Human Rights Day, Dec. 10. The case is before Judge Ma. Theresa de la Torre Yadao, who was directed only last April to try the Kuratong Baleleng case with dispatch. But last October, the Supreme Court directed the case to be re-raffled. Why? Her court is a special one designated to handle heinous crimes.

Two years ago, President Macapagal-Arroyo and Secretaries Robert Romulo, Nani Perez, Angelo Reyes and Jose Lina, along with the communists, pressured Judge Yadao to release the Mamburao Six, the peasants we have been representing since 1997. I supported the move. She flatly refused, invoking Lord Mansfield in ruling that discretion "must be governed by rules, not by rulers."

When the Supreme Court reconsidered earlier this year the 13-0 decision in Sen. Panfilo Lacson's favor a year before, a top Department of Justice official quickly went to her to seek a re-raffle, creating the perception that he does not like a judge who calls it as she sees it, which was precisely the assurance she gave him, who might have been scared she might accord Lacson—no favorite of ours in the human rights community—due process. She is not the only one of course. Many good men and women remain in the judiciary, beginning with the Supreme Court. Judge Yadao is certainly one of them. A fellow Mabini lawyer who knows her, says she is unbribable and totally inoculated from pressure.

We did not get what we wanted from her, the release of the farmers, but I came away respecting her all the more.

—R.A.V. SAGUISAG,
ravslaw@mozcom.com

Wiping out the Meralco refunds

IT seems that the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) and the government has chosen to be Santa Claus to Meralco and not to the people by dismissing the petitions of consumers and business groups to junk its provisional electric rate increase.

Meralco is claiming that it needs the increase to expand its services and to conduct major capital projects. We fear that this has been the refrain that we hear time and again with the government's all-out privatization of the whole energy industry—consumers paying for the capital layout and as well as the profits of those who control the services we use every day.

We recall the time when the Energy Regulatory Board rushed and gave a provisional increase in 1994 only to find out that Meralco calculated its rates differently. This led to the 16.7 centavos overcharge that was collected for over 110 months and eventually ended with the Supreme Court ordering Meralco to refund the consumers.

The very same 16.7-centavo refund is now being wiped out with the more than 19-centavo rate increase if we include those made with the unbundling of charges last May. What was refunded to us is now being taken back!

It is time that the ERC listen to consumers instead of Meralco. President Macapagal-Arroyo should act more to the people's interest instead of letting the Lopezes profit from this.

Of course, the consumers probably cannot match any Christmas wheeling and dealing that leads to the 2004 polls but a lot of angry consumers will probably not elect a President who did nothing to stop their electric bills from increasing just a few days before Christmas.

—DR. GIOVANNI TAPANG,
national chair,
Samahan ng Nagtataguyod ng Agham
at Teknolohiya para sa Sambayanan ,
132B Matahimik St., Teacher's Village, QC

'Ano siya, sinusuwerte!' Erap reportedly said

By Armand N. Nocum and Cynthia D. Balana

HEHERSON Alvarez sent his aides at the 11th hour to negotiate his inclusion in the senatorial ticket of the opposition but Joseph Estrada said no way, according to a confidant of the ousted President's.

Ferdie Ramos yesterday told the INQUIRER that Estrada refused to ring up the contact numbers supposedly left by Alvarez's aides.

"*Ano siya, sinusuwerte* (He's pushing his luck)!" Ramos quoted Estrada as saying.

According to Ramos, Alvarez's aides visited the Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino office in Mandaluyong at around 3 p.m. Monday and spoke with Ray Rodis, a member of the PMP executive committee.

"They said they were sent by Alvarez to negotiate whether he can be included in the unfilled slots of the KNP (Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino). They left numbers for us to call should we be willing to take Alvarez in," Ramos told reporters during a break in the Estrada plunder trial before the Sandiganbayan.

He said Rodis told him about the matter in a phone call just when he was conferring with Estrada at the latter's detention quarters at Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal. He said he relayed the news to Estrada, who reportedly balked at dialing the numbers.

"We were elated with the news, thinking that we finally got even with the administration party for raiding our stable of candidates, Alvarez being a Lakas spokesperson. But President Estrada turned the offer down," Ramos said.

Contacted late yesterday afternoon, Estrada confirmed that he had been told of such an offer from Alvarez. "But the [details] were hazy," he said.

Asked whether there was any way for Alvarez to get into the opposition ticket, Estrada replied: "He has no chance."

Alvarez's version

But Alvarez has another version of the story. This was what he told the INQUIRER:

A friend of his, a former governor of Surigao, phoned him to say that Estrada wanted to talk with him after learning of his rift with the leaders of his party, the Lakas-CMD.

"I said, 'OK.' After all, I also want to talk to the President whom I impeached."

After the phone conversation with the ex-governor, Ramos immediately called him to say: "Sir, *ano ho ang maipaglilingkod namin* (what can we do for you)?"

Alvarez's reply: "*Wala kayong maipaglilingkod sa akin. Gusto raw akong makausap ni* Estrada (There's nothing you can do for me. I hear that Estrada wants to talk with me)?"

At which point Ramos promised to contact Estrada at Camp Capinpin to ask about his message to Alvarez.

"*Pakulo lang yan ni Ferdie Ramos* (That story is just Ferdie Ramos' doing). Why would I ask for Estrada whom I impeached? It does not make sense," Alvarez said, adding:

"If indeed I wanted to be included in the senatorial lineup of the opposition, I would have talked directly to Fernando Poe Jr., not Estrada. But I will not do that because Poe's senatorial ticket is composed of Estrada's allies."

Lakas spokesman . . .

From page A1

fore the deadline for the filing of certificates of candidacy on Monday.

But Alvarez denied this. *(See story above.)*

Tourism

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. said that Malacañang had offered the tourism portfolio to Alvarez and that the latter was considering the matter "very graciously."

De Venecia, who is Lakas president, also said the party had fielded civil society leader and former Education Undersecretary Nestor Kalaw to warm the 12th slot in its senatorial lineup pending the final decision on whether Alvarez or Miriam Defensor-Santiago would be included in the ticket.

But the Speaker indicated that Santiago was the preferred choice. "We don't want to lose a dynamic spokesperson," he said.

The tourism portfolio was formerly held by Richard Gordon, who is now among Lakas' 11 senatorial candidates.

De Venecia said Alvarez, who is also the Cabinet officer in charge of overseas Filipino communities, could "make a good tourism secretary."

"We are appealing to Sonny Alvarez to remain with Lakas," he said.

As for Santiago, the Speaker said there had been "preliminary discussions regarding [her] inclusion in the ticket."

"We invited Miriam," he said, but qualified that he was not among those personally involved in wooing the feisty ex-senator.

Santiago, a close ally of Estrada's, has filed her certificate of candidacy as a senator under her People's Reform Party.

Roco

Alvarez said he was saddened by Lakas' choice of senatorial candidates, particularly the inclusion of Estrada allies in the ticket.

He denied that he had bolted Lakas by virtue of his declaring himself an independent candidate, saying he was still a party member and spokesperson who was merely exercising his democratic options.

But asked which group he would coalesce with should he decide to bolt Lakas, Alvarez said he found presidential candidate Raul Roco's principles and vision acceptable.

"I'm not yet joining Roco but ... I'm looking at our common affinity," he said.

Alvarez said that he and Roco stood as sponsors at a wedding on Sunday and that they had a chance to talk about certain issues.

"I found out that I have sympathies for his position, particularly his uncompromising position on graft and corruption. Let's just say I'm opening up talks with Roco," Alvarez said.

He said it was painful for him to see Lakas compromising its principles.

"They're doing all sorts of things in the party," he said in Filipino. "They've put in candidates from different jungles. Tell me, is that right?"

Alvarez said he had been uncompromising in his fight against graft and corruption since the time of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

"I have been at the forefront of the struggle since martial law," he said. "I fought to have ill-gotten money given to land reform. I authored the impeachment charges against a corrupt president."

He also said that unlike Ms Macapagal who was "wishy-washy" regarding the impeachment last year of Chief Justice Hilario Davide, he sacrificed a lot as a Lakas member when he took up the cudgels for the latter.

Dilemma

Alvarez confirmed that De Venecia had phoned him to assure him a slot either in the Lakas senatorial lineup or in the Cabinet.

Asked about his response, he said: "I'm still in a deep dilemma. But hope springs eternal in an activist heart."

He pointed out that a good political party should be a vehicle for development. "If all we do is political opportunism, *lagi na lang tayong paurong* (we will always be retrogressing," he said.

Alvarez said he and labor leader Ernesto Herrera, a former senator, were originally included in the top six of the Lakas senatorial slate.

But Herrera was removed in favor of Estrada supporter Orlando Mercado, he said, adding that this was why Herrera bolted Lakas and joined the senatorial ticket of movie actor Fernando Poe Jr.

In his case, Alvarez said he had to be removed because "I'm breathing fire." *With a report from Carlito Pablo*

China wants civet cats killed by Jan. 10

GUANGZHOU, China—China has given a Saturday deadline for the slaughter of civet cats as it tries to avert a SARS outbreak, but World Health Organization experts said the cull itself could pose a health hazard.

China on Monday confirmed its first SARS case since a world epidemic was declared over in July, and began culling civet cats, a local delicacy, on fears a new strain of the deadly virus may have jumped from the animals to humans.

Health officials in the southern province of Guangdong said a virus gene sample from the new SARS patient—a 32-year-old television producer—resembled that of a coronavirus found in civet cats.

To eliminate a possible fresh source of the disease, the province where Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome originated in November 2002 ordered wild animal markets immediately closed.

"The provincial government of Guangdong ordered the immediate shutdown of local wild animal markets and the killing of all civet cats before Jan. 10 in an urgent measure to contain a possible outbreak of SARS," Xinhua news agency said.

To prevent wildlife from entering Guangdong, the booming province neighboring Hong Kong, eight inspection stations had been set up along highways in eight major cities.

A health official estimated the number of civet cats to be killed in markets at about 10,000. Photographers saw the animals being drowned in disinfectant and their carcasses taken off in huge metal containers for incineration.

But WHO officials have urged caution on worries about the possible health risks of a slaughter, which, if not carried out carefully, could expose humans to contaminated blood.

"We would recommend that the authorities do take extreme caution," Jeffrey Gilbert, a WHO expert in diseases communicable from animals to humans, told a news conference.

"We do feel that there is a potential hazard there."

Julie Hall, a WHO coordinator, urged authorities to assess the risk of slaughter compared with the risk of allowing the animals to live on in their cages.

"It's very important that we do that so that we can make sure that we're actually doing the thing that is most beneficial for public health," she said.

Xinhua quoted the health ministry as saying the Guangzhou patient was in stable condition after continuous medical treatment since being admitted to hospital in late December. *Reuters*

38 people in Laguna ordered to stay home

From page A1

Manuel Dayrit said her condition was improving.

HEALTH Secretary Manuel Dayrit and WHO country representative Dr. Jean-Marc Olive answer questions during a press conference on the suspected outbreak of SARS in the country. AP

Recovery

"She has no more fever, a significant sign that she is on the road to recovery," Dayrit told reporters. M.D. still has pneumonia and remains isolated at the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) in Muntinlupa City. Her husband, who only has cough, is isolated in a different room.

"She is in a much better situation now than (the other day) ... Her lungs are functioning better, which is certainly a good sign," Dayrit told a news conference at the DOH central office in Manila.

"Those who have been identified as contacts should have nothing to worry about as long as they are asymptomatic," he added.

The domestic worker first became ill on Dec. 24 and was visited at home by well-wishers. She then went to a provincial hospital where she was treated with antibiotics but did not improve, said Luningning Villa, spokesperson for the health department's infectious disease unit.

On Jan. 4, she was quarantined at the RITM. Her husband has an upper respiratory infection. However, the health department said the husband's infection predated his wife's homecoming.

The woman has no recollection of coming in contact in Hong Kong with anyone exhibiting SARS symptoms, but authorities are still tracing her contacts there, Dr. Troy Hepte of the National Epidemiology Center said.

Thirty-four people, who had contact with the woman at a government hospital in Laguna, have been placed in home quarantine, including two doctors who initially treated her.

Elementary school closed

Four residents of her village have also been isolated. Those quarantined, including M.D.'s three children, were all receiving counseling and have not developed any symptoms, according to Dayrit. Their isolation will last 14 days.

The 98 households in Barangay De la Paz were also advised to avoid unnecessary travel but no restrictions were imposed on people going in and out of the area.

"We are trying to trace all people who had social contact with the woman from the time she had fever," Luisiana Mayor Pepito Diwajon said.

"We are awaiting instructions from health authorities on what to do next," Diwajon said. "We have sent Vitamin C to residents and will try to disinfect the woman's house."

Barangay De la Paz has some 200 residents, according to Juacalla. It is some 4 km from the town proper.

Generoso "Boy" Opena, Laguna provincial administrator, told the INQUIRER that Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro had directed all health officers to take precautionary measures in dealing with people who had contact with the woman.

Opena said the emergency room of the provincial hospital was closed, secured and fumigated yesterday by health officials.

Hysteria

He said hysteria occurred among patients when private hospitals did not permit any transfer of patients. "Some of those who were quarantined cried out of self-pity as they were held inside a solitary room for the patients' safety."

The Catholic Church plans to remind priests all over the diocese of San Pablo, Laguna, to revive anti-SARS measures adopted last year by former Laguna Bishop Francisco San Diego to prevent the spread of the dreaded disease.

Msgr. Bernardino Cortez, diocesan administrator of San Pablo, said he wanted all priests in the diocese to reactivate the anti-SARS measures adopted last year if the woman from Luisiana was declared positive for SARS.

A circular letter dated April 30, 2003 said priests administering the sacrament to the sick with "face masks" should immediately clean their hands with alcohol.

President Macapagal-Arroyo called for calm. "With vigilance, preparedness and knowledge, we can meet and beat this threat if it rears again," she said in a statement.

Ms Macapagal assured the jittery public that the government was prepared to deal with the SARS threat. "The air and sea ports are on alert," she said. "We have the proper facilities to isolate and treat any cases."

Edgar Manda, general manager of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, said that medical checks on arriving passengers from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore were being stepped up.

The airport has ordered three more thermal scanners in addition to about a dozen already in place, according to Manda.

Last year, the country reported 12 SARS cases, including two deaths. All but four were traced back to a Filipino nurse who contracted the virus in Toronto and infected her father after returning home. Both died.

Thousands of Filipino women work in Hong Kong as nurses and domestic helpers, part of an army of at least seven million overseas workers who prop up the economy by sending money back to their families.

Prayers

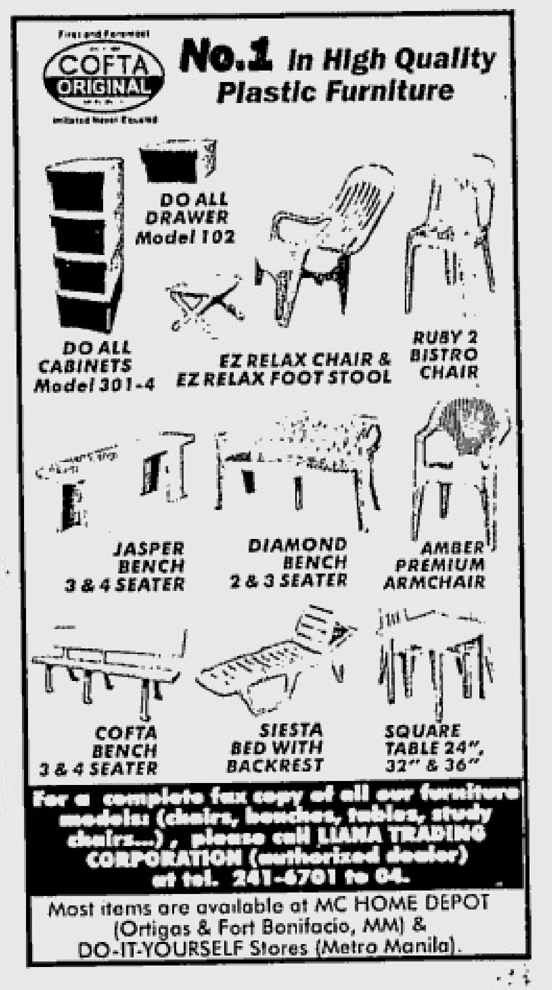
M.D.'s fellow residents in Barangay De la Paz, Luisiana, were praying that her fever was due to her earlier womb tumor ailment and not to SARS.

Jhie Juacalla, a church worker, said M.D.'s relatives, fellow villagers and town mates were hoping that her case was curable.

He said the atmosphere in the town was "panicky" when residents learned of the condition of M.D., who was already complaining of fever upon arriving in Luisiana.

Last year during her vacation, M.D. was complaining of tumor in the womb, enlargement of her heart and low blood pressure, according to Juacalla. He said M.D.'s ailment was purportedly healed through oral medication.

Not taking chances, the rural health unit distributed free medical masks, Vitamin A and ascorbic acid to all residents in the village. *With reports from Gil Cabacungan Jr., Reuters and AFP*



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Loren charms Erap boys at Manila Polo Club

From page A1

wore T-shirts with Edsa Tres and anti-PPA (Power Purchased Adjustment) slogans—pointed references to the two issues pro-Estrada supporters have thrown at Legarda.

The senator ate "palabok" while Obina and the rest ordered club sandwiches and a "bagnet meal."

The "crying scene"—Legarda's shedding of tears during the impeachment proceedings—served as opening topic of the dialogue.

Legarda explained her tears as an "outburst of emotions."

"*Hindi naman ako* robot na *walang emosyon* (I'm not emotionless, like a robot)," she said.

Obina said his group wanted to know if Legarda regretted her part in Edsa II, which led to Estrada's ouster, and whether she now conceded that there was injustice in Estrada's loss of power.

The group also asked Legarda if she saw any real improvement in the lives of the poor under the Macapagal administration, and whether Legarda would support a similar "form of power grab" in the future.

Legarda said that when she severed ties with the administration in October, she was already saying that "this government did not deliver its promise and that the ideals of Edsa Dos were not met."

"It failed, that's why my goal is to work with FPJ in bringing back the trust of people in government," Legarda said.

"If there was a plot to grab power (then), I was not a part of it. I only did my part as a senator-judge and if some of my questions then hurt the former President, it was not intentional and those questions were just natural consequences of my inquisitive mind," she added.

ACTION king and presidential aspirant Fernando Poe Jr. gestures during a meeting with student leaders at a restaurant in Libis, Quezon City, on Tuesday night.

ERNIE SARMIENTO

SENATOR Legarda joins hands with Estrada loyalists following a dialogue with them at the Manila Polo Club in Makati City Tuesday. Woman at right is Cherry Cobarrubias of the True Marcos Loyalist Alliance.

BOY CABRIDO

Younger Estrada

Former San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada was also at the Dasmariñas news conference, along with fellow KNP senatorial candidate Juan Ponce Enrile.

The younger Estrada said he was happy he was now part of Poe's Senate slate.

Jinggoy Estrada was earlier excluded from the lineup because some opposition leaders were concerned about his plunder case still pending before the Sandiganbayan.

He said Poe had invited him to join his ticket but refused to reveal to reporters what he and the latter talked about regarding his re-entry.

But Jinggoy Estrada stressed that his plunder case had "no bearing" on his candidacy.

"I'm not convicted," he told reporters.

Asked whether the ex-mayor's entry helped heal the rift between Poe and Estrada, Morales said only that Estrada's entry into the slate "helped a lot in the sense that his nomination was an addition to the representation of the party."

The younger Estrada told reporters that he respected the decisions made by Poe and the KNP.

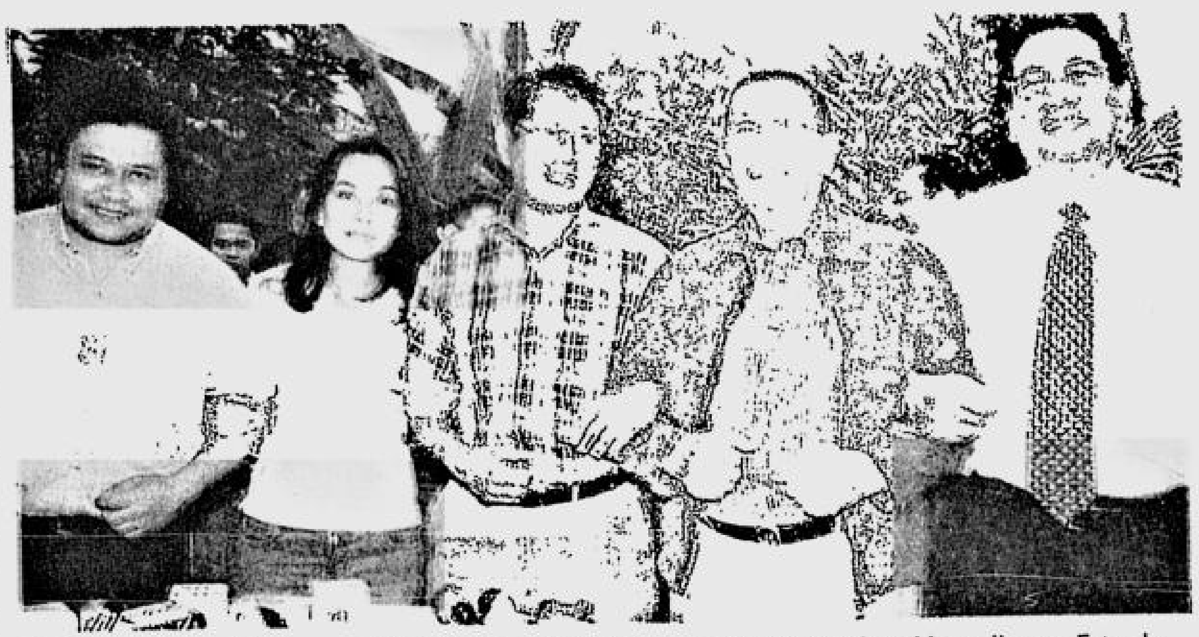
"And I'm a party man and I am supporting all the candidates (of the KNP)," the younger Estrada said.

Dynamic process

Asked whether all was now well between Estrada forces and Legarda, Morales said in a mix of Filipino and English: "I see this as a dynamic process. You just can't say that today everything is perfect and everything is settled."

What is important, he said, was that there is now a process that the opposition is observing in taking common positions and that it has now "clear strategic directions."

"And my own view of any kind of leadership, any strong leadership should allow for differences of opinion," Morales said.



SEN. Loren Legarda locks arms with KNP members, (from left) former San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada, Horacio "Boy" Morales, former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile and lawyer Rufus Rodriguez, after a meeting in Makati City on Tuesday.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTOR

"This is the start of a heart-to-heart talk with them," Legarda told reporters.

She later told reporters that the support of the PMP was "heartwarming and welcome."

Legarda noted that she had met Obina's People's Alliance for Truth and Justice earlier, which similarly expressed support for her bid.

In a separate interview, the national president of the pro-Estrada People's Movement Against Poverty (PMAP) also said his group was now open to supporting Legarda's candidacy, so long as the vice presidential hopeful espouse their cause and seek justice for ousted President Estrada.

Lope Santos said his group had "not closed the door" on Legarda.

Giving way

In the press briefing, Legarda also said she had told Poe the other day that she was willing to give way and yield her spot on the slate, given the flak she had been getting from Estrada supporters.

"(Poe) told me '*Huwag, kailangan kita, walang iwanan* (Don't. I need you. We stick together)'," she said. "And I said I need you as much as you need me and he said same *tayo* Loren same *tayo, walang iwanan* (same here, we stick together."

"So how can you say No," Legarda asked.

In her dialogue with Obina's group, she said it was Estrada himself who opposed her decision to yield her spot.

"I told FPJ, you get Greg (Senator Gregorio Honasan) and I would just run for reelection in the Senate but FPJ told me that he needs me and that Erap told him, "*Sana huwag umatras si* Loren (I hope Loren does not back out)."

Obina's group, which is critical of the Lopez family and Meralco, also asked Legarda pointblank if she was running to fight for the interest of the Lopezes.

Legarda answered, "I cannot be dictated, not when I was with ABS-CBN, and certainly not at this stage."

Obina's group did not delve into the controversial Jose Pidal case but Legarda volunteered that she was "Kontra Pidal" from the very start.

Legarda told PATJ representatives that she was running to make sure that the country will not experience another "six years of Pidal."

"I am a true oppositionist at heart but I am not attacking personalities but rather the issues involved," Legarda stressed.

All throughout the two hour meeting, the words "apology and sorry" were not mentioned by Legarda.

But at the end of the meeting, a specific agreement was reached between Legarda and PATJ.

Obina agreed to supply Legarda a national agenda to address the problem of the section of society dubbed as the poorest of the poor.

Tricycle slogan

Joey Pamolarkano of Todo, a San Juan-based tricycle drivers association who joined Obina in the meeting, brought a sticker with the slogan: "Todo kay FPJ at JV."

After shaking hands and posing for the camera, Pamolarkano said, his group would soon distribute stickers that would bear the slogan: "Todo kay FPJ , JV at LOREN na rin!"

Also joining the luncheon meeting with Legarda was Cherry Cobarrubias of the True Marcos Loyalist Party List Group.

Cobarrubias pledged support for Legarda's candidacy, saying it was Imee Marcos' non-inclusion in the Poe's slate that made her group decide to go full blast in supporting Legarda's candidacy.

Cobarrubias and other known Marcos loyalists have abandoned the former first lady Imelda Marcos but remain loyal to the late strongman.

"Loren is also the best candidate that has the moral and political will to really end the insurgency problem in our country through formal peace talks with the CPP-NPA," Cobarrubias explained. ***With a report from Michael Lim Ubac and Armand N. Nocum***

Comelec makes split in LDP party official

From page A1

tion job against the opposition," he said, insinuating that Malacañang pressured the Comelec to split the votes of the opposition.

He said that the poll body should have been more forthright. "(It should have ruled in favor) the Angara faction or the Butz Aquino faction. *Medyo bakla* (It's neither here nor there)."

"But I think it's appealable," he added.

Another hearing

Abalos, who was one of two commissioners who voted against the decision, said the issue of which party would be named the dominant minority group—whether LDP or the Nationalist People's Coalition—would still have to be decided in another hearing.

In a 5-2 vote, the commission decided in a nine-page resolution to grant "legal equity" to both parties. This means that candidates for president down to the last Sanggunian Bayan kagawad would be considered official candidates of the group which nominated them, either the Angara Wing or the Aquino Wing.

In the decision penned by Commissioner Rufino Javier, the Comelec said each faction will have representation in any election committee the party was entitled to.

"For copies of the election returns, the 'Angara wing' will be entitled to copies corresponding to odd number of precincts ... and for the 'Aquino Wing' to the even number of precincts," the Comelec ruling read. The commission added that this was based on the assumption that the LDP would be named the dominant minority party.

Can one faction refuse to share election returns with the other? Abalos answered less than clearly, noting that nothing barred one group from doing so, and adding that the factions can name their inspectors to the precincts assigned to them.

Roots of issue

The issue over who can nominate the LDP official candidate started when Lacson pushed through with his candidacy over the objections of Angara, who supported Poe.

Angara tried to preempt Lacson's filing of his certificate of candidacy by telling the Comelec that only he—as the LDP chair—had the sole authority to nominate candidates, based on the party constitution and by-laws.

But the Lacson camp opposed the move, citing the traditional powers of the secretary general in endorsing candidacies.

The feud worsened when each faction punished the other group's leader: Angara placed Aquino under "indefinite forced leave" while Angara found himself "suspended."

During the Dec. 30 hearing, the Aquino wing maintained that the LDP secretary general had the authority to nominate its official candidates, citing past experience.

In its decision, the Comelec said that internal disputes were for the party members to settle alone. The commission only has to decide who has the authority to endorse party nominations.

The Comelec said that under the LDP constitution, it is the party chairman who has the power to sign documents on behalf of the party and represent the party in external affairs while the secretary general has limited powers which is exercised under the supervision of the chair or the two higher bodies of the party—apparently referring to the national congress and the national executive committee.

But the Comelec also noted that during the 2001 elections, it was Aquino, as the LDP secretary general, who was authorized to sign the certificates of nominations, including that of Angara.

"This action by (Aquino) is in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the LDP, (and was) not questioned by Angara ..." the Comelec said, adding that the authorization has not been revoked or recalled by the national congress of the LDP.

Time constraints

Because the party intramurals remained unresolved as the filing deadline neared, the Comelec then decided to recognize both factions, designating them the "Angara Wing" and the "Aquino Wing."

Abalos maintained, however, that the LDP constitution clearly states that it was the party chair who has the power and function to sign documents for the party, including the certifications of nominations.

He even cited portions of last month's hearing where Aquino admitted that it was indeed the LDP chair who had the authority to nominate candidates.

"Even assuming that the signing authority of the secretary general has not been revoked, Aquino also categorically stated that the signing authority of the secretary general must be accompanied with an authorization from the party chair, hence it is clear that (Aquino) on his own, has no authority to sign the certificates of nominations," he wrote in his four-page dissent.

Abalos also said that the LDP should not be divided into "wings" as its constitution does not provide for the splitting of the party into factions.

The other dissenting commissioner, Mehol Sadain, voted to grant the petition "in part," agreeing that the Comelec had no authority to settle the issue "insofar as the party intramurals are concerned."

However, he said that in the event of a conflict between the two parties, the party chair has the authority to certify nominations, based on a reading of the LDP constitution.

SUERTRES
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METRO
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Wives, sons take centerstage in north Metro

By Margaux Ortiz, Edson Tandoc Jr. and Luige del Puerto

FIRST, the men. Now, their wives and children.

In northern Metro Manila, wives and children of incumbent officials are seen leading the list of political aspirants for the May 10 elections.

In Caloocan City, third-term Mayor Rey Malonzo hopes to land a seat in Congress representing the city's 1st District. He is up against Susana Punzalan and Oscar Malapitan.

Malonzo's wife Gigi is running for mayor, hoping to replace her husband. She is up against Rep. Edgar Erice, Rep. Enrico Echiverri, Enrique Peras Jr. and former city mayor and Malonzo's long-time rival Macario Asistio Jr., himself from a family of politicians.

Malonzo's son, Ronald Allan, is running as councilor.

Valenzuela

In Valenzuela City, three-time Mayor Bobbit Carlos has endorsed his wife, Margarita, for the local chief executive position. She is up against Rep. Sherwin Gatchalian and Rep. Magtanggol Gunigundo.

In Malabon City, Jeannie Sandoval is running for mayor.

Sandoval is the wife of Rep. Ricky Sandoval. She is up against acting city Mayor Jayjay Yambao, Melencio Roxas Jr. and Canuto Oreta, the brother-in-law of Sen. Tessie Oreta.

Malabon

Before third-term Malabon Mayor Amado Vicencio was slapped with a one-year suspension in October 2003, rumors had circulated he would endorse his wife, Floren, in the elections.

But it was Vicencio's son, Arnold, who is now running as vice mayor under Oreta's ticket.

Vicencio's son is up against acting Vice Mayor Benjamin Galajuran, Romeo Santos and Alfredo Tanchangco.

Continuation

Malonzo told the INQUIRER yesterday he endorsed his wife for mayor so she could continue the projects he had started.

Vicencio also cited the same reason when asked why he endorsed his son.

In Mandaluyong, members of the Domingo clan at around midnight on Monday pulled off a surprise when they fielded Ernesto "Bibot" Domingo against Benjamin "Benhur" Abalos Jr. in the congressional race.

Over the past weeks, reports had indicated that Domingo was eyeing Abalos' post, as he did in the past.

Mandaluyong

Domingo had twice run and lost to Abalos in the mayoralty race.

Domingo's sister, Angelyn Domingo-Buan, will be running against Rep. Neptali "Boyet" Gonzales in the mayoralty race.

In 2001, Buan also ran and lost to Gonzales in the congressional race.

The Domingos are running under the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino-Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino ticket (KNP-LDP), while Abalos and Gonzales are running under the administration party, Lakas-Christian and Muslim Democrats (Lakas-CMD).

Abalos failed to convince his uncle, Arsenio Abalos, to drop his plan of running for mayor in the coming May polls.

The elder Abalos, who is chair of the Association of Barangay Chairmen, officially filed his certificate of candidacy on Monday.

Makati Councilor Oscar Ibay, who is also running for mayor, has dropped his original running mate John Arenas for another candidate, saying Arenas was "not interested in winning."

Another mate for ibay

Ibay filed his certificate of candidacy under the administration party Lakas Christian-Muslim Democrats with new running mate Elena Maccay during the weekend.

The councilor told the INQUIRER in a phone interview that he decided to replace Arenas two weeks ago "to protect the interests of the group."

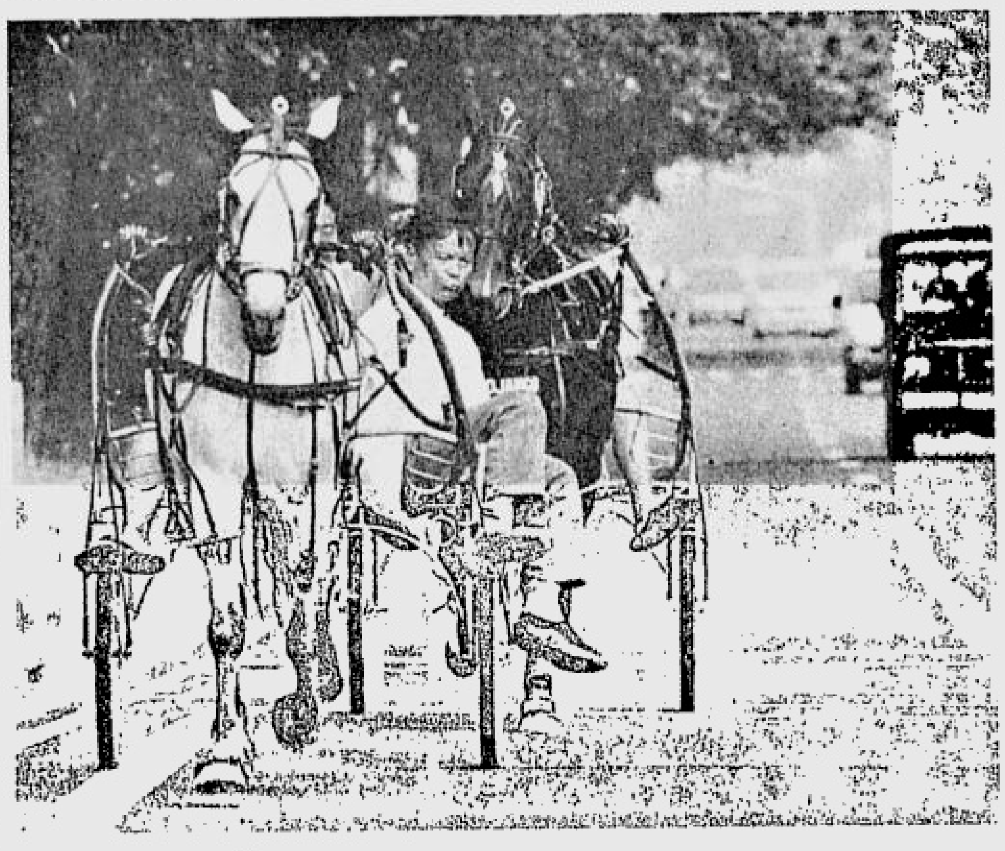
Ibay also said Arenas' Lakas-CMD nomination has been cancelled after he asked the party to nominate Maccay.

Still running

But Arenas still filed his certificate of candidacy for vice mayor, also under Lakas-CMD, despite Ibay's decision.

"Ibay has not spoken to me about his decision," said Arenas, son of socialite Baby Arenas. "I only found out in the papers that he filed for candidacy with another running mate."

Arenas also belied Ibay's claim that Lakas has cancelled his nomination, stressing that on Monday, he got a certified true copy of his nomination from Lakas National Executive Director Joey Rufino and submitted it to the Comelec.



LEISURELY RIDE
Riding on a carriage at a slow horse's gait makes for a fine, pleasurable tour of Manila's Baywalk on Roxas Boulevard.
ERIK ARAZAS

Candidates told to be careful where they put their posters

By Tarra Quismundo and Margaux Ortiz

THE AIR may be smelling of elections already but political aspirants should refrain from posting election campaign material around Manila or face disqualification.

The Manila City Hall vows to strictly implement the ban on posting election campaign materials around the city, with the election campaign period yet to begin.

"Those who post illegal election propaganda materials will be held liable. We still have three months to go," warned Manila Mayor Joselito Atienza Jr., himself a candidate in the coming elections.

The official campaign period for national candidates begins on Feb. 10, while campaigning for local candidates officially starts on March 27.

Atienza said City Hall would designate common poster areas for the candidates.

This developed as the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) began tearing down streamers and posters bearing holiday greetings from politicians in the metropolis.

"We should not let these banners and streamers last until the next Christmas season," said MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando.

Fernando also warned aspiring politicians to control their posters and campaign materials before and after the official campaign period starts.

He said "misplaced" campaign posters would be immediately removed by the agency's clearing group.

Jinggoy-Zamora showdown fizzles out

By Luige del Puerto

THE LAST-MINUTE inclusion of former Mayor Jinggoy Estrada in the senatorial slate of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP) has averted what was shaping up as a "Battle Royale" in San Juan between a son and a close ally of ousted President Joseph "Erap" Estrada.

Jinggoy was reported to have been preparing to take on San Juan Rep. Ronaldo Zamora in the congressional race after he initially failed to make it to the senatorial lineup.

Jinggoy, the ex-president's son by Sen. Loi Estrada, could no longer run for mayor because Erap has chosen his half-brother, Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito, as the family's candidate for mayor.

"We were expecting a showdown between the two. In fact, we were already ready for it. We were prepared for the 'Battle Royale'," said Angel Mendoza, a staff in Zamora's district office.

Mendoza said Zamora was already in a "fighting mode," willing to slug it out till the end, Mendoza said.

Mendoza added that their camp immediately conducted a loyalty check among their political leaders on Sunday, the day the KNP came up with its senatorial slate, initially sidelining Jinggoy.

"But now, we are more relaxed. We expected the congressional race to be one-sided, in favor of Zamora," he said.

Zamora, who served as executive secretary to Jinggoy's father, will be facing retired police official Adams Jimenez and Ericson Alcovendaz, who recently won as vice mayor in a recount ordered by a Pasig City court.

Cristóbal Cruz; 74

THE NOTED writer Andrés Cristóbal Cruz died at the Philippine Heart Center on Jan. 5. He was 74.

Cruz's body lies at the Mount Carmel Parish Church in Project 6, Quezon City. On Friday morning, necrological services will be held at the University of the Philippines Chapel. Cruz will be cremated later that day.

Cruz was a fictionist, poet, book-editor and newspaper columnist.

CRIZELLYN V. Lagan

Help us find Crizellyn

EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD Crizellyn V. Lagan of Lumbangan, Nasugbu, Batangas was last seen on Nov. 28, 2003.

To those who might know of her whereabouts, please contact Ms Thelma Sobrado at 0919-6243043 or Mr Lope de Castro at 0919-8602931.

3 cops, soldier rapped for gun ban violations

By Christian Esguerra

AT LEAST three policemen and a soldier are in danger of losing their jobs for violating the three-week-old election gun ban.

PO2 Jeffrey Leyva, PO2 Eduardo Mabutas, PO2 Bonifacio Bigay and Private First Class Rimbert Prado are under investigation either for firing their service firearms or carrying them while not on duty, according to Supt. Willy Atun, chief of the directorate for operations' special operations division.

Leyva, in particular, is in hot water after he allegedly threatened someone with a 45-caliber pistol in Cubao, Quezon City.

In his report to the Commission on Elections, Director Avelino Razon, police director for operations, said there were 53 persons arrested, 45 firearms and five bladed weapons confiscated nationwide as of Dec. 30. Also included in the arrest were four security guards.

A total of 23 cases have been filed in court, while 19 of the persons arrested were still being investigated.

Authorities are monitoring 12 "areas of concern" where election-related violence might erupt. Areas of "immediate" concern are two places each in Regions 5, 12 and 13 and one each in Regions 2, 3, 8, 10, 11 and the Cordillera Administrative Region.

Razon said Southern Tagalog has five "areas of concern," while regions 3, 5, 7, 8, CAR and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao each have one, he said.

METROBRIEFS

Another 'cop-killer' killed

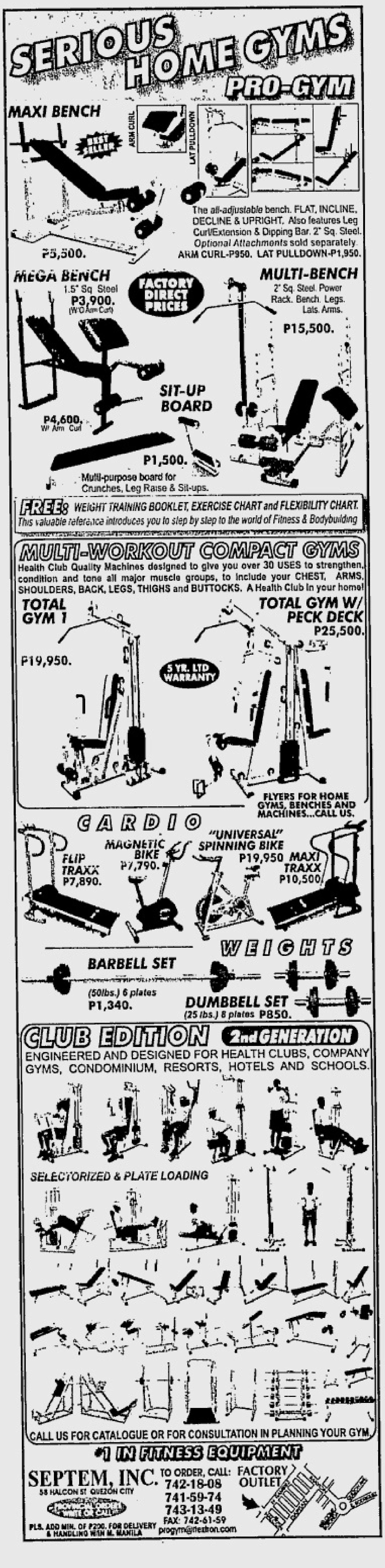
THE SUSPECT in the killing of P02 Nelson Gonzales was shot dead in an alleged shootout with police in Tondo, Manila. Dexter Gopetio of Tondo earlier posed as a witness to the killing of Gonzales, who was stabbed to death near his home in Don Bosco, Tondo, on New Year's Eve. However, investigators found evidence that Gopetio had killed the policeman. On Monday night, Anti-Carnapping (Ancar) agents in Manila told Gopetio to accompany them to look for Gonzales's scooter, which was stolen on the night he was killed. During the search in Lakandula, Tondo, Gopetio allegedly grabbed the 9-mm pistol of his escort, P02 Jesus Simon, and fled. The suspect was later slain in an ensuing shootout with Ancar men. Earlier, Rodolfo Garcia, the alleged killer of SP03 Danilo Reyes, was also killed when he allegedly grabbed the gun of one of his police escorts after his capture. *Leila B. Salaverria*

2 families clash in San Juan

A MINOR argument during a basketball game has led to two families shooting at each other in San Juan. On Monday afternoon, police arrested Bernard Crisologo, 22, of 44 P. Narciso Street, after he and a relative allegedly shot at the house of a neighbor. Brothers Elmer de la Cruz, 31, and Edilberto, 23, and Rico Fabellaran, 22, were wounded in the shooting. The brothers were both hit in the legs, while Fabellaran was wounded in the neck. According to the police, members of the Crisologo family also stormed the De la Cruz residence on New Year's Eve and a shootout ensued when members of the De La Cruz family reportedly fired back. Fortunately, no one was seriously hurt in that incident. At about 5 p.m. on Monday, members the Crisologo family again allegedly went to the house of the De la Cruz family and another shootout took place. The police arrived at the height of the exchange of gunfire and arrested the suspect. *Luige del Puerto*

Rotary Club of Metro SFDM

ADVERTISING and marketing executive Rey S. Mendoza was inducted last night as the 17th president of the Rotary Club of Metro SFDM. Mendoza, 52, is a former secretary of Barangay Kanluran in Quezon City. Special guest in Mendoza's induction held at the Amoranto Multi-Purpose Hall was Quezon City Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista.



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SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: Knicks vs Cavs; 8 a.m (r - 8 p m.); Solar Sports—Newly acquired Stephon Marbury leads New York as they visit Gund Arena to take on King James and his Cleveland teammates.

Vintage NBA - Harry Glickman, Chick Hearn and Johnny Most; 11 a.m.; Solar Sports—Get to know about the voices behind the games in this tribute to radio commentators.

NBA Greatest Game - 1986 All-Star Game; 12 noon, Solar Sports—See Islah Thomas steal the spotlight in the midseason classic in Dallas.

TENNIS Hopman Cup; 4 p.m.: Star Sports—Host Australia battles Belgium in Perth.

Tata Open; 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m.; Star Sports—It's down to the final 16 in India.

MARC Pingris of Welcoat trips while fighting for the loose ball with Gerald Jones of Viva in their game last night. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Hot David powers Montaña past ICTSI

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PRO league-bound Gary David hit 11 of his 22 points in the pivotal third quarter as Montaña Jewel beat ICTSI-La Salle, 79-67, yesterday and stayed in the hunt for a semifinal berth in the PBL Platinum Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

The 6-foot-2 David, expected to be among the early picks in this months's annual PBA draft, was all over the court to make sure the Jewels wouldn't take an early vacation.

Montaña rose to fifth in the standings with its fifth win in 11 games, a half-game behind Fash Liquid. The Jewels stand to gain a back-door entry to the semis with a win over league-leading Welcoat on Jan. 10 coupled with a loss by Liquid Power to ICTSI tomorrow .

If that happens, Montaña and Fash Liquid will end up with the same elimination round slates. The two teams are 1-1 head-to-head, each side winning over the other by three points.

PBL officials have yet to decide how to break the possible deadlock, however.

The Archers, led by the 26 points of ex-pro Dino Aldeguer, fell to their ninth defeat in 11 outings.

ICTSI appeared ready to spoil Montaña's party but lost its bearings once David started to connect from all angles and slash through its defense at will.

In the second game, Viva Mineral Water-FEU salvaged a 77-71 victory over Welcoat to improve its card to 4-7.

The Tamaraws, who dealt the lethargic Paint Masters' third loss in 11 games, still have a faint chance of making the next round if they win over Fash tomorrow.

STANDINGS	W	L
Welcoat	8	3
Sunkist-UST	7	4
Blustar	7	4
Fash Liquid	5	5
Montana	5	6
Viva-FEU	4	7
ICTSI-La Salle	2	9

GAMES TOMORROW
(UST Gym)
1:45 p.m.—ICTSI vs Fash
4:00 p.m.—Blu Star vs Sunkist

Scores:

FIRST GAME

MONTAÑA 79—David 22, Salvador 10, Guerrero 9, Magsumbol 8, Magpayo 6, Capati 6, Sanel 5, Ennie 5, Batuyol 3, Sayon 2, Basco 2, Alfad 1.

ICTSI 67—Aldeguer 26, Yeo 12, Thoss 11, Cabatu 7, Gavino 4, Magsumbol 3, Aquino 2, Ramos 2, Jose 0, Tang 0.

Quarters 21-22, 40-37, 65-56, 79-67

SECOND GAME

VIVA-FEU 77—Margate 13, Misolas 13, Santos 13, Miranda 11, Ybanez 6, Jones 6, Isip 6, Co 4, Napa 3, Sinco 2, Razon 0, Rizada 0.

WELCOAT 71—Yap 12, Reyes 11, Pingris 10, Tangkay 10, Sotto 7, Omolon 7, Artadi 6, Wilson 4, Kalaw 4, Capus 0, Cuan 0.

Quarters :13-10, 34-27, 54-48, 77-71.

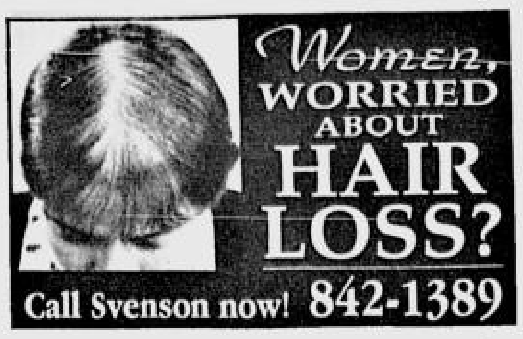
WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Search for new RP five talents bared /A20
■ Bucks spoil Iverson return /A22

Cristobal named NBL commish

CRISTOBAL

ARTURO "Bay" Cristobal yesterday has been appointed commissioner of the National Basketball League (NBL) with a mandate to resume its fifth annual basketball championship since 1999 under the auspices of the Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP).



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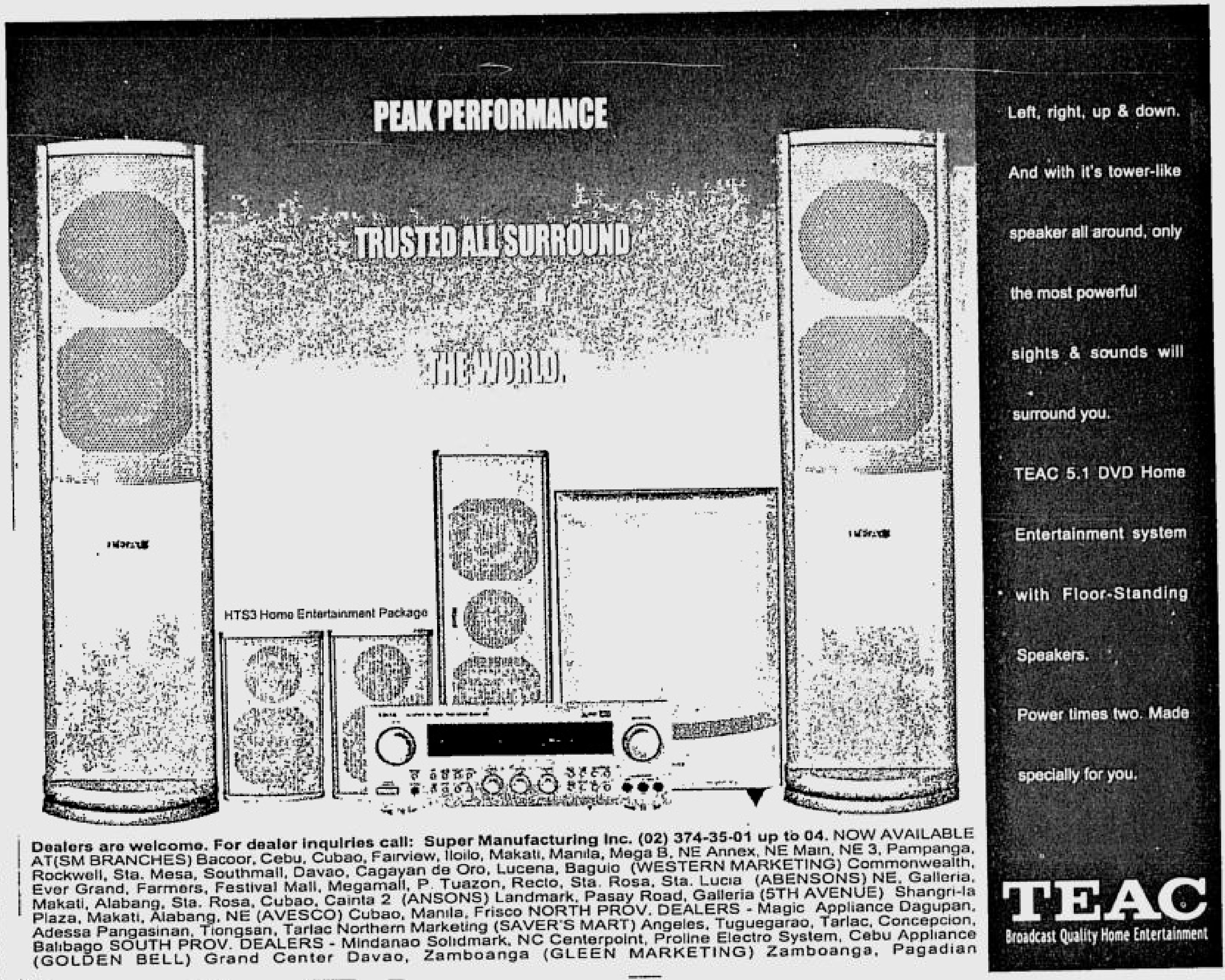

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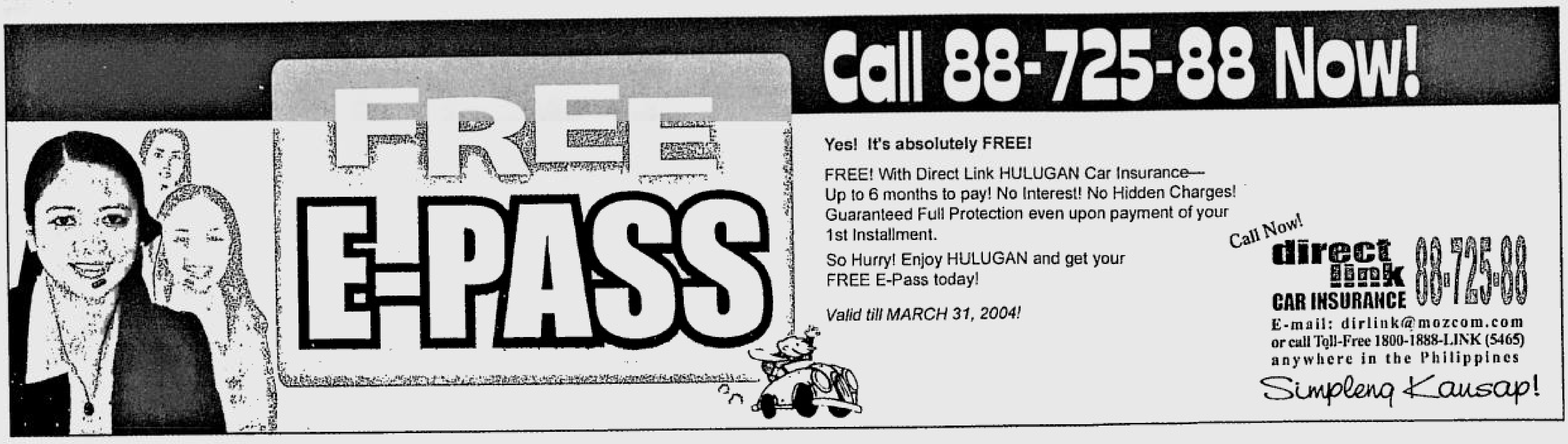

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OLYMPIC QUALIFYING

Battle-ready RP bets gunning for at least 4 berths

TARGET, OLYMPICS: Members of the Philippine boxing team to the Asian Boxing Olympic Qualifying Tournament at the Puerto Princesa City Coliseum in Palawan. (From left) Maraon Goles, Maximo Tabangcora (reserve), Francis Joven, Mark Jason Melligen, Florencio Ferrer, Junard Ladon, Arlan Lerio, Violito Payla and Harry Tañamor. Not in photo is Chris Camat. ROGER CARPIO

By Dennis U. Eroa

EXPECT Filipino boxers seeking slots in the Athens Olympics to rock the 22nd Asian Boxing Olympic qualifying tournament on Jan. 10-18 at the Puerto Princesa City Coliseum in Palawan.

Head coach Gregorio Caliwan yesterday said the nationals are battle-ready and looking at the prospects of snaring at least four of the 24 slots up for grabs in the first of three Olympic qualifiers reserved for Asia's best boxers this year.

"If we get four, I'll be very satisfied. If we get more than four, I'll be very satisfied," said the 54-year-old Caliwan, a retired Army man.

The event, sponsored by the Philippine Sports Commission, Accel, Revicon and Pacific Heights, will be televised on a slightly delayed basis over NBN 4.

Caliwan said the nine-man Philippine team is determined not to frustrate their countrymen.

"Boxing in front of your countrymen gives you an added motivation to win. The team has prepared rigidly and now it's time to show our stuff," said Caliwan.

"Our boxers want to treat our hosts, Palawan Gov. Joel T. Reyes and Puerto Princesa City Mayor Edward Hagedorn, to an explosive show."

Other members of the coaching staff are Boy Velasco, Alex Arroyo, Pat Gaspi, Pol Cantancio, Elmer Pamisa and Olympians Ronald Chavez and Vic Arsena.

ABAP president Manny Lopez said Reyes and Hagedorn have done everything to ensure the success of the event.

"In behalf of the ABAP, I would like to express my gratitude to both Gov. Reyes and Mayor Hagedorn for their solid cooperation in ensuring the success of this event," Lopez said.

Earlier, Reyes and Hagedorn said the people of Palawan and Puerto Princesa City were looking forward to treating members of the 31 competing countries to the province's brand of hospitality.

"We are honored to host the qualifying, which kicks off the country's determined bid to win its first Olympic gold," said Reyes and Hagedorn in a statement.

"We will pray for a successful Philippine campaign."

Light-flyweight Harry Tañamor, lone Filipino gold medalist in the recent Vietnam SEA Games and silver medalist in the Busan Asiad, banners the RP campaign.

The other members of the team are flyweight Violito Payla, bantamweight Arlan Lerio, featherweight Junard Ladon, lightweight Florencio Ferrer, light welterweight Mark Jason Melligen, welterweight Francis Joven, middleweight Chris Camat and light heavyweight Maraon Goles.

Of the 24 slots up for grabs, 12 slots will come from the lighter divisions; light flyweight (48 kg), flyweight (48-51 kg); bantamweight (51-54 kg) and featherweight (54-57 kg).

The gold, silver and bronze medalists in each of these divisions will go to Athens.

The lightweight (57-60 kg); light welterweight (60-64 kg); welterweight (64-69 kg); middleweight (69-75 kg); and light heavyweight (75-81 kg) offer two slots each (gold and silver medalists).

A slot each will go to winner of the heavyweight (81-91 kg) and super heavyweight (more than 91 kg) categories.

Search for new RP five talents bared

By Roy Luarca

BASKETBALL talents in the countryside need not go to Metro Manila anymore to be discovered. National coaches Boyzie Zamar and Dong Vergeire will go to them instead starting next month.

ZAMAR

In a nationwide search encompassing 22 key cities in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao and dubbed "Tryouts ng Bayan," Zamar and Vergeire will look for RP Team-caliber talents in the search to be jointly undertaken by Cebuana Lhuillier and the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

Zamar said the talents search is necessary because the Philippine team, which kept its SEA Games cage crown in Vietnam has been depleted. As of last count, seven mainstays of the squad are all set to join the pro draft, with three more likely to be enlisted by pro teams.

National players in the draft pool are Ranidel de Ocampo, Jean Marc Pingris, Irvin Sotto, Rich Alvarez, Wesley Gonzales, James Yap and Gary David.

PBA teams are also interested in tapping free agents Ricky Calimag, Allan Salangsang and Celino Cruz, leaving Dennis Madrid and Richie Melencio as the only holdovers among the RP players mentored by Aric del Rosario.

"What can we do, we don't want to intervene on their future," said Zamar. "Anyway, we believe that there are lots of talents available and we can readily form a competitive team for the 2005 Southeast Asia Basketball Association, SEA Games and Asian Basketball Confederation championships."

The agreement was sealed recently in a meeting among BAP secretary general Graham Lim and executive vice president Christian Tan and Danny Francisco, special projects director and assistant to Jean Henri Lhuillier, EVP and GM of Cebuana Lhuillier.

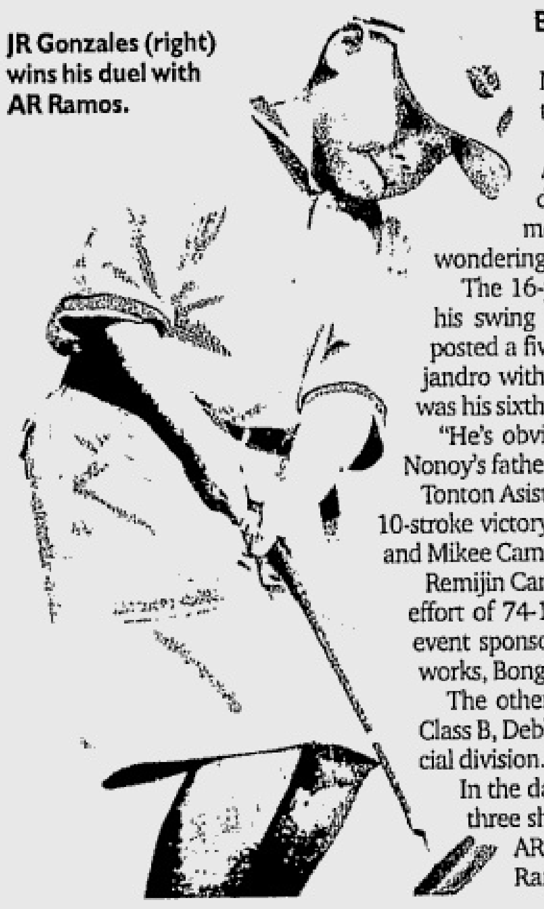
Zamar said the talent search, which will last from 1 1/2 to 2 months, is a two-pronged program aimed at recruiting prospective national players and at holding outreach clinics.

Mindanao will be the initial stop, with the cities of Davao, Cagayan de Oro and General Santos as the likely venues.

Tryouts will also be held in Iloilo, Bacolod, Dumaguete, Bais, Cebu, Ormoc and Tacloban in the Visayas before these are held in Luzon, particularly in Baguio, Pangasinan, Tarlac, Pampanga, Albay, Lucena, Batangas, Laguna, Cavite and Manila.

BAP president Tiny Literal said Tryouts ng Bayan is part of the BAP's grassroots development program.

Negrido puts it away with four-under 68



JR Gonzales (right) wins his duel with AR Ramos.

By Jong Arcano

NOT really by choice, Nonoy Negrido has one of the best swing gurus by his side.

But after Negrido ran roughshod over his Class A rivals with a closing four-under-par 68 yesterday in the Philippine-Japan Friendship tournament at Tagaytay Midlands, his father-coach was wondering if he still needed help.

The 16-year-old Negrido, given the freedom to work on his swing himself by his well-known swing coach-father, posted a five-stroke win over first-round co-leader Mico Alejandro with a 140 total at the Tagaytay Midlands course. It was his sixth straight tournament victory.

"He's obviously doing a good job without my help," said Nonoy's father, known to his many students as Sarge.

Tonton Asistio came through with a tournament-best 67 for a 10-stroke victory in boys' Class B. Asistio beat Miko Yee (74-151) and Mikee Camitoc (76-153).

Remijin Camping also ran away with the title with a final-day effort of 74-147, way ahead of Jayvie Agojo (82-163) in the event sponsored by Tagaytay Midlands, IWSI, Milkjoy, Comworks, Bong Lopez Golf, Nelson de Villa and La Jolla Golf.

The other girls' division winners were Geleen Handog in Class B, Debbie de Villa in Class C and Dottie Ardina in the special division.

In the day's most excviting duel, JR Gonzales rallied from three shots down on the last three holes to beat archrival AR Ramos by a stroke. Gonzales shot 83-166 while Ramos ended up with 84-167.

He sure knows how to stop Manny Pacquiao

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

HE has promised to show up.

Unlike his favorite tiny lady president, Manny Pacquiao, this time, is sure to honor his word.

So on Friday, after the world boxing celebrity has received his Athlete of the Year plum at the Manila Pavilion, we'd ask him what he thinks is the greatest gift he has received of late.

He definitely will have a long list to choose from.

This, my personal choice, may not be on Pacquiao's lineup of the best things that ever happened to him.

It doesn't cost a cent in the open market at the moment.

It definitely is not tangible as a world boxing crown itself.

It may appear totally insignificant to many boxing buffs.

***

Ready? The decision of trainer Freddie Roach to stick it out with Team Pacquiao.

Yes, it may not sound important enough to many.

Pacquiao himself could be stunned if told of this choice.

OK, the Athlete of the Year award carries some cash gifts with it.

There's also a strong likelihood President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo would do the honors of handing him both the trophy and envelope.

But above everything, Freddie Roach and his decision to continue guiding and training Pacquiao should be the runaway choice as the best thing that ever happened to the boxing wonderboy from the Philippines.

***

Pacquiao had nearly lost Roach.

No. The venerable American boxing trainer, whom I consider a genius, had actually been lost.

There came a tug-of-war.

Roach next sided with another promotional group that contested and criticized Murad Muhammad, Pacquiao's US promoter.

Roach went as far as call Murad a thief who has made it a habit to cheat Pacquiao.

But, after a brief skirmish, Roach reconsidered.

***

It's like this. It was not only the fear of losing Roach that should concern us.

Pacquiao and his wily handlers could readily find somebody else.

In fact, a few calibered figures had been mentioned.

Of course, as had been mentioned here, there could be no better trainer who could handle Pacquiao than Roach.

The two are a perfect prizefight act.

Take it from one who had observed the golden chemistry close enough at the Wild Card Boxing Club off Fountain in Hollywood.

If they were a boy and girl, you would swear Pacquiao and Roach were made for each other.

They have tremendous respect for each other's capabilities.

***

Pacquiao definitely draws immeasurable joy and confidence working under Roach's eyes.

For one, that unforgettable win over the celebrated Mexican Marco Antonio Barrera was, pure and simple, a Roach masterpiece.

It was Roach who studied minutely all the moves, strengths and weaknesses of Barrera, before coming up with the winning plot.

It's easy to believe that Roach expertly succeeded in breaking down Barrera's moves.

At the same time, he worked on Pacquiao's strengths, building up his relentless offensive.

Who knows, if to a race car, Roach must have torn down Pacquiao's reverse gear?

Why? Against Barrera, it was all go, go, go, up front, bam, bang, blam, non-stop.

***

And only after the great triumph, that stunned boxing experts all over the world, did Roach agree to bare the main secret behind Pacquiao's greatest win.

Roach finally revealed what he had been telling Pacquiao all the while.

That Barrera's biggest weakness was the inability to punch back once under siege.

Barrera, indeed, was a helpless, willing target while Pacquiao, digging in like a war tank, pressured and terrified him.

In fact, in the few times that Pacquiao played tentative, when he stood and stalled in front of his foe, Barrera managed to connect.

The fact is, without the strict instructions from Roach, Pacquiao could've been in trouble himself.

Barrera did not know how to move back and punch at the same time.

Pacquiao did not have to gamble. He wholly capitalized on Barrera's weakness.

***

Anyway, prior to the Barrera masterpiece, there was that easy one against the overrated Emmanuel Lucero in Los Angeles last July.

Lucero, a notorious hooker, did the unexpected by fighting from a very deep crouching stance.

He appeared like he wanted Pacquiao to swim with him on the floor.

After Lucero resurfaced and Pacquiao stopped him with a crackling left, Roach mumbled to me the secret strategy.

Well, we never had the golden chance to ask Mr. Roach, a former top featherweight contender, how he helped James Toney achieve the incredible feat of knocking out Evander Holyfield.

The truth is it would have been disaster if Pacquiao had lost Freddie Roach.

What could've prevented Pacquiao's next foe from hiring Roach?

And how are we to deny that Roach, more than anybody else, knows how to put Pacquiao where he had been before.

Down on the floor.

Fallen boxer buried

BOLONSARI, Cagayan de Oro City—The Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines in Mindanao hailed John Eman Juarez as a hero, citing his amateur boxing accomplishments, as he was laid to rest here yesterday, nine days after he was knocked out in a bout and fell into a coma on Dec. 29.

He died on New Year's Day.

Juarez, who represented Cagayan de Oro City in several national tournaments, was kayoed in the fourth round by Rocky Fuentes in Danao City.

Juarez was buried in a cemetery in Barangay Bolonsari.

In attendance were fight promoter Sammy "Don King" Gello-ani of Cebu, GAB—Cagayan head Carlos Almirante and his assistant Vic Adriano, and Juarez's ex-manager Flory "Florskie" Rontal.

"We would like to express our gratitude to sportsman Tony Aldeguer of Cebu for looking after us in our time of grief," said Juarez's common-law-wife Brenda, clutching their two-year-old son Brave Eman.

Games and Amusements Board commissioner Emmanuel Palabrica said the agency has already released the financial aid for Juarez's family. The cash came from the Boxers' Welfare Fund.

Palabrica also said he has asked the GAB's legal chief, Ricardo Villamil, to conduct a thorough inquiry into Juarez's death. *Salven L. Lagumbay*

SPORTSWATCH

Sy bags 12-under title in Andrada Cup

TOP seed Akio Hari Ong Sy rallied past Ernesto Pantua III, 6-1, 4-6, 6-3, yesterday to take the boys' 12-under title in the 15th Andrada Cup Age-Group Tennis Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. Second seed Jacob Lagman won the unisex 10-under title over unranked Angelo Joseph Rivero, 6-2, 6-1. In the girls' 12-under division, top seed Sarah Jane Lim outlasted third seed Zhane Quitara, 2-6, 6-4, 6-3, to advance to the final against No. 4 Joan Therese Opulencia, a 6-0, 6-1 winner over Judy Em Botor. In the boys' 18-under class, No. 1 Irwin de Guzman defeated Raymond Villarete, 6-1, 6-1, fourth seed Nico Riego De Dios prevailed over No. 5 Kyle Dandan, 7-6 (8), 6-2 and Nestor Celestino Jr. survived Laurence Magaway, 1-6, 6-4, 6-2 to reach the semifinals of this weeklong event sponsored by PSC and Dunlop balls. In the girls' 16-under category, Trudy Amoranto struggled past Japanese Abe Chihiro, 6-2, 4-6, 7-5, to forge a semifinal meeting with another Japanese Aoi Uchinaka, who beat Jessica Agra, 6-3, 5-7, 6-4. Top seed Bambi Zoleta beat Stephanie Pontiveros, 6-1, 6-0, to advance against Japanese Naoko Ueshima.

P1.2M in prizes staked in Tamiya racing

PRIZES worth P1.2 million will be at stake when the Panasonic SM Cup Mall Tour revs off again this Sunday with the Let's & Go! Tamiya M4WD Car Racing mini four-wheel drive race at the SM North Edsa. The Panasonic tour kicked off in the Pines City last Sunday with races at SM City Baguio. Completing the January leg of the races is the Jan. 25 event at SM Megamall. For inquiries, email sherwin_abuel@creative products.com.ph or call 725-0901, 725-0793, 718-2110.

Where did the money go?

I AM not saying that my friend Rod Nazario mishandled the prize money of boxing idol Manny Pacquiao, but I agree with Tempo editor Rey Bancod when he wrote on Monday that Nazario, the boxer's business manager, could help settle this nagging question once and for all by showing all the documents, including a full accounting of the expenses incurred by Team Pacquiao, in the fights promoted by American Murad Muhammad.

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

I hate to be the *contra-vida* here, but the way the disturbing story reached me raises serious questions about what it is and where it is headed.

It started with Pacquiao's smashing stoppage of Mexican featherweight legend Marco Antonio Barrera in San Antonio, Texas, last November. Even though it was non-title bout, the victory gave the 25-year-old Pacquiao an immense amount of national attention, including a bonus from President Macapagal-Arroyo and an award as 2002 PSA Co-Athlete of the Year from the Philippine Sportswriters Association.

But did the story end happily after that?

No, according to Pacquiao's famous American trainer Freddie Roach, who decided to quit after alleging financial fraud committed by some members of Team Pacquiao. Roach alleged he was cheated of $25,000 in that Barrera fight alone and accused Murad of shortchanging the Filipino fighter.

For instance: If Pacquiao's actual purse was $700,000, and not $350,000 as publicly announced by Nazario, where did the other half go? Is it true that Pacquiao received only $97,500 out of that $700,000 prize money?

To make matters worse, Marty Elorde, registered manager of Pacquiao, also said Nazario failed to give any receipt (even from the Vagabond Inn, where members of Team Pacquiao stayed), submitting instead a loose accounting of the expenses, just like in the previous transactions for Pacquiao's other bouts in the United States. Nazario merely submitted the sum total of the expenses. *"Kuwenta lang ng mga gastos."*

Because of this controversy, popular lawyer-sportsman Rudy Salud, who served as the founding secretary general of the World Boxing Council, pulled out of the organizing group that would have staged a Pacquiao-Barrera rematch in Manila sometime in April.

Said Salud: "In view of suspicions surrounding the recent fights of Manny Pacquiao, we have deemed it prudent to disengage from ongoing negotiations to stage Pacquiao's next fight in Manila, which was anchored on our desire to help our country overcome its negative international image and also to give Pacquiao's countrymen a chance to see their hero in action."

Nazario denied the accusations, saying these were all baseless. He also explained his side on the reported non-payment of taxes in the United States, stressing that the money reserved for the US Internal Revenue Service had been deposited in a US bank.

"No need to worry," he said.

Still many say Pacquiao will be better served by a full disclosure of all expenses than by mere denials. As Bancod wrote in his column: Do we have to wait for Congress to get into the fray?

***

BOXING IS A CRUEL SPORT. Because its aim is to maim, to attack the opponent's head and body with the lethal weapon of a padded fist, boxing is a high-risk sport where tragedy is forever waiting. While it is true that the Games and Amusements Board under chair Eduardo Villanueva has taken steps to minimize deaths and injuries atop the ring, Filipino boxers still continue to die.

On New Year's Day, Cagayan de Oro boxer John Eman Juarez died three days after he was knocked out in Danao City by Rocky Fuentes of the Tony Aldeguer stable.

Juarez, who was knocked out in the fourth round of a scheduled 8-rounder, was immediately brought to a hospital for first-aid treatment and later transferred to the Cebu Doctors' Hospital, where he underwent surgery to remove blood clots in his brain.

Last October, Bukidnon's Freddie "Amang" Gimay succumbed to head injuries after being knocked out in the eighth round of a scheduled 10-rounder by Roger Gadian in a fight card promoted by Bert Rodrigo at the municipal gymnasium in Titay, Sibugay, Zamboanga del Sur.

I gathered that Gimay had a record of 14 losses and two draws in his last 16 fights and, under GAB rules, should not have been allowed to fight. But why was Gimay allowed to fight? How many more boxers have to die before GAB rules are strictly followed?

$.2-M POT

DHL becomes Open sponsor

By Al S. Mendoza

OPEN
26 - 29
MIMOSA G

DHL Worldwide Express' Charles Brewer (fifth from left) shakes hands with NGAP president Rod Feliciano after the contract signing. With them are (from left) NGAP director Andy Dumlao, treasurer Alice Andrada, DHL chief finance officer Dawn Feliciano and marketing manager May Cuevas.

THE PHILIPPINE Open Golf Championship finally got DHL yesterday as its official title sponsor for the event's 88th edition set for Feb. 26-29 at the Mimosa Golf & Country Club in Clark, Angeles City.

DHL, the world's leading express and logistics provider, has earmarked $200,000 for the country's No.1 golf tournament won last by Canadian Rick Gibson in 2002.

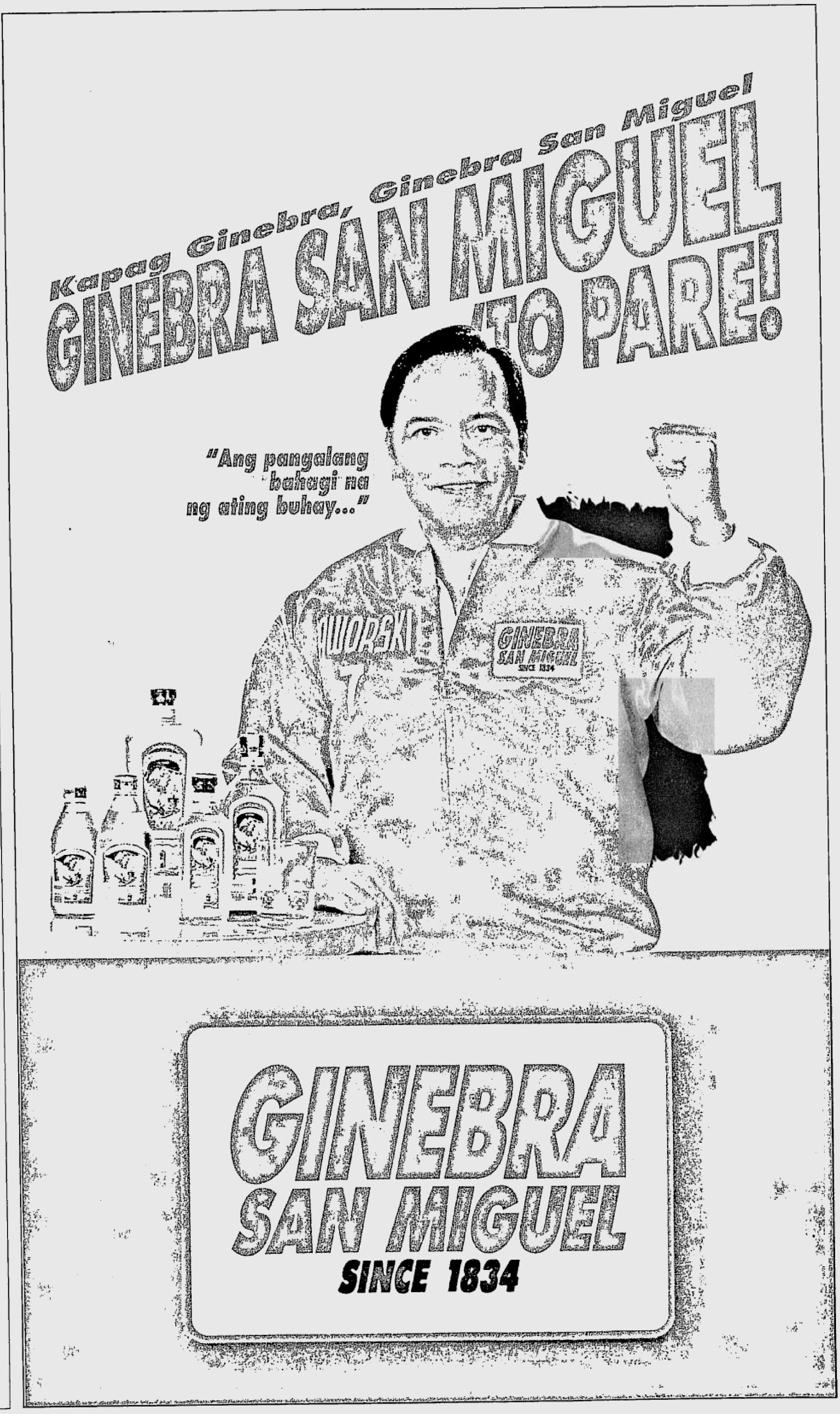
Gibson is all set to defend his crown against a clutch of crack challengers led by the legendary and 1998 champion Frankie Minoza, 2001 champion Cassius Casas and millennium titleist Gerald Rosales. Top par-busters from Asia, New Zealand, Australia and the United States are also expected to attend.

"DHL will support the 88th Philippine Open as a tribute to Filipino excellence in sports. Through the Open, DHL encourages world-class Philippine golfers to participate actively and earn recognition for the Philippines worldwide," said Charles Brewer, DHL Express Philippines country manager.

Brewer signed DHL's sponsorship yesterday at the Manila Golf Club at Forbes Park, with Rod Feliciano, president of the organizing National Golf Association of the Philippines, doing the honors for NGAP.

The Brussels (Belgium)-based DHL has air, ocean freight and overland transport services in more than 220 countries and territories worldwide.

"I am glad that our dear baby, the RP Open, has finally found a robust ally in DHL," said Feliciano. "With Mr. Angeles (Manny) of Clark Development's Mimosa Golf & Country Club agreeing earlier to host the event, we now have a powerhouse team ready to ensure a blockbuster in our next Open."



Kapag Ginebra, Ginebra San Miguel
GINEBRA SAN MIGUEL 'TO PARE!
"Ang pangalang bahagi na ng ating buhay..."
JAWORSKI
7
GINEBRA SAN MIGUEL SINCE 1834
GINEBRA
SAN MIGUEL
SINCE 1834

Shell poised to tap US mentor Moran

By June Navarro

HOPING to change its misfortunes in the past four seasons, Shell will name American John Moran as its new head coach this week, a reliable source told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Except for some minor kinks that need to be ironed out, Moran is expected to map out the Turbochargers' quest for a championship, their first since the 1999 All Filipino Cup.

"They (Shell officials) are just working out some of the details in his contract but it's already a done deal," said the same source.

Team manager Bobby Kanapi promised to announce the squad's new coach today. He also said Shell would retain the services of the rest of its coaching staff.

Perry Ronquillo quit the head coach job last month.

But Moran will be up for a tougher challenge when the Basketball Coaches Association of the Philippines steps in on the issue.

BCAP head Chito Narvasa has vowed to block Moran's assumption with help from the Department of Labor.

Blockbuster deal sends Marbury, H'daway to NY

NEW YORK—Stephon Marbury is returning to his hometown as part of a blockbuster trade between the New York Knicks and Phoenix Suns on Monday.

The Knicks acquired Marbury, Penny Hardaway and Cezary Trybanski from Phoenix for Antonio McDyess, Howard Eisley, Charlie Ward, Maciej Lampe, the rights to Milos Vujanic, two first-round draft picks and cash, Suns owner Jerry Colangelo confirmed.

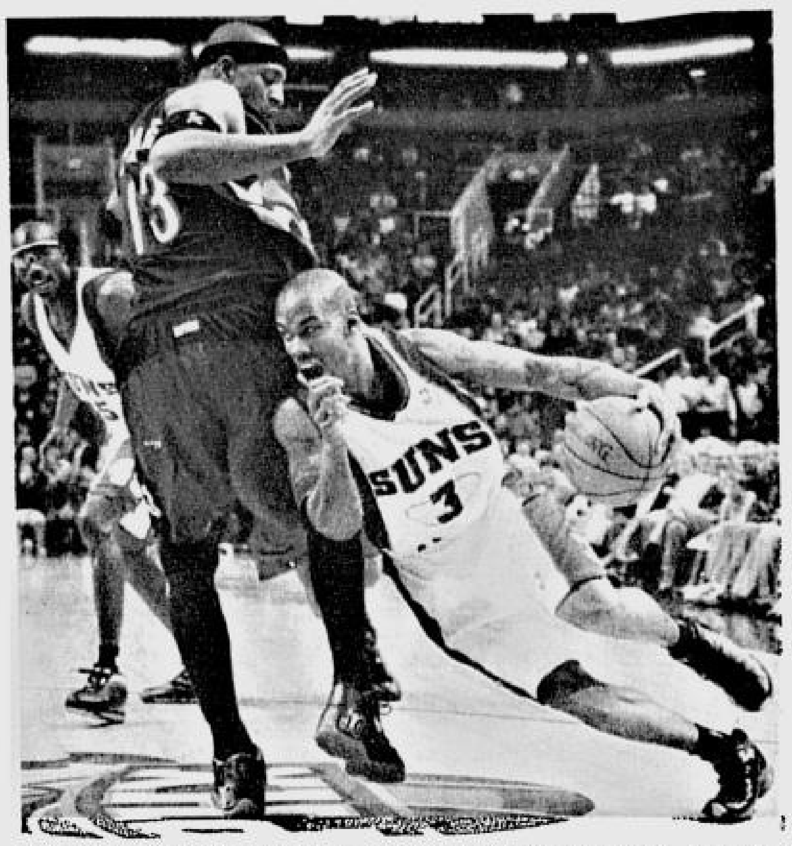
The trade is the fourth of Marbury's career. The Brooklyn native was drafted by Milwaukee and immediately dealt to Minnesota, where he subsequently forced a trade to New Jersey. The Nets sent him to Phoenix for Jason Kidd, and he's now headed to the Knicks in the first major move made by new team president Isiah Thomas.

"I think we got the best deal," Knicks center Dikembe Mutombo said. "He's among the best point guards in the league, he's an All-Star player."

The trade represents a major shakeup for both teams. In exchange for its best player, Phoenix will go under the salary cap next summer and will have at least $8 million to offer to a free agent class that includes Kobe Bryant.

Colangelo said the Suns will save $20 million to $25 million in salary and luxury tax costs through the 2004-05 season. That will allow the Suns to rebuild a team that was eliminated in the first round of the playoffs last season after missing the postseason the year before.

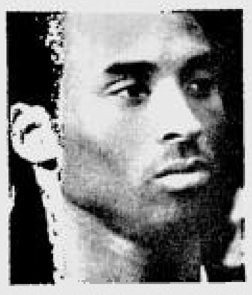
"This is a big picture kind of move, and a bold move," Colangelo said. "We didn't have flexibility under the cap, and we were hamstrung by some contracts. This allows us to be a player in free agency if we choose to. This is not a talent-for-talent deal." *AP*



MARBURY (right) drives around Toronto's Jerome Williams FILE PHOTO

Judge slates pre-trials in Kobe's case

DENVER—The judge in Kobe Bryant's sexual assault case scheduled a series of pre-trial hearings that will last until nearly April, making it unlikely the NBA star would go to trial before the season ends.



BRYANT AP

Judge Terry Ruckriegle on Monday set hearing dates for Feb. 2-3, March 1-2 and March 24-25 to settle disputes over what evidence can be used at trial.

"I doubt if the Lakers' schedule will have any impact in the judge's mind, but it certainly will in Kobe Bryant's mind," said attorney Dan Recht, past president of the Colorado Criminal Defense Bar. "I don't see a trial happening in this case until summer at the earliest."

The NBA Finals begin in early June and will end by June 20.

Bryant, 25, is charged with sexually assaulting an employee of a mountain resort west of Vail last June. Bryant has said the sex was consensual. If convicted, he faces four years to life in prison or 20 years to life on probation.

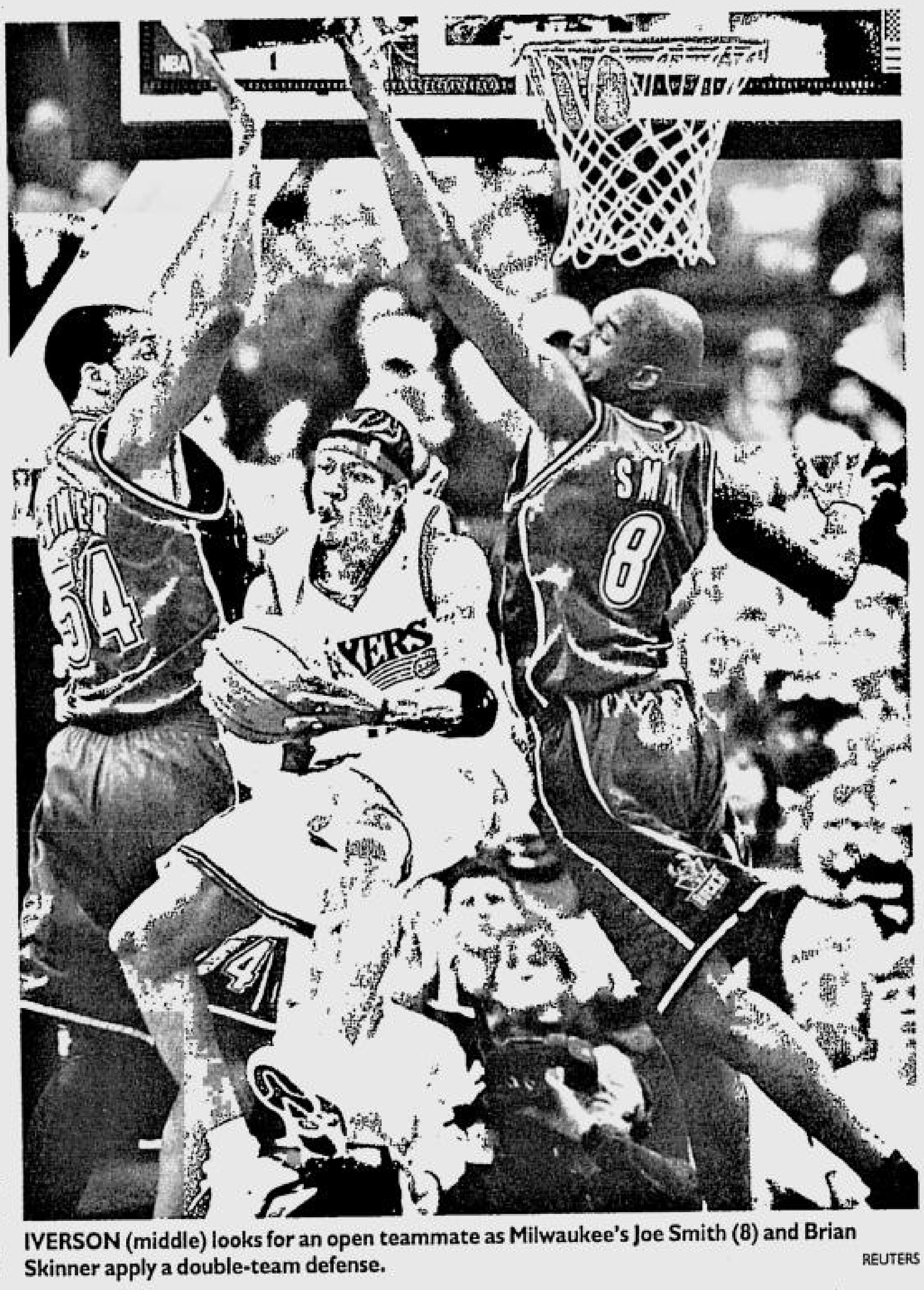
In a Jan. 2 court filing released Monday, defense attorney Hal Haddon asked the judge to close the February hearing, saying evidence expected to be discussed could taint the jury pool and may not even be allowed at trial.

The hearing was scheduled to deal with a defense request to throw out statements the Los Angeles Lakers guard made to police early July 2. The defense says the statements were obtained illegally because a sheriff's investigator used a hidden tape recorder and never read Bryant his rights.

"If the statements attributed to the defendant are disseminated to the public and then suppressed, the intense media coverage of this case will insure that the jury pool will be exposed to these statements," Haddon wrote. *AP*

NBA ROUNDUP

Bucks spoil Iverson return



IVERSON (middle) looks for an open teammate as Milwaukee's Joe Smith (8) and Brian Skinner apply a double-team defense. REUTERS

PHILADELPHIA—Desmond Mason spoiled Allen Iverson's return to Philadelphia's lineup, scoring a season-high 24 points in the Milwaukee Bucks' 88-76 win over the 76ers in the NBA on Monday night.

Toni Kukoc added 14 points for the Bucks, who have won three straight and are a season-high two games over .500. The Bucks have won seven of 10, including two straight on the road.

Complete results:
Detroit 78, Boston 68; Milwaukee 88, Philadelphia 76; Indiana 87, Miami 65; Chicago 87, Phoenix 82; Houston 83, Golden State 65; San Antonio 98, Denver 74; Utah 108, Dallas 94; Seattle 119-108, OT.

Mason scored 17 points in the second quarter when the Bucks built a 17-point lead, then added a 3-pointer early in the fourth for a 75-57 lead.

Iverson was back after missing the last 10 games with a bruised right knee. The Sixers went only 3-7 without Iverson, including 1-4 on their Western road trip.

Iverson, playing without a protective pad, scored 18 points with seven turnovers in 37 minutes—six fewer minutes than his average.

In Seattle, Ray Allen scored a season-high 42 points, including seven in overtime, to help the SuperSonics overcome a 23-point deficit and defeat Portland, 119-108.

The Trail Blazers led, 87-69, after the third quarter but Allen scored 20 points in the fourth to help send the game to overtime.

Jerome James added five points in the extra period for the SuperSonics.

Allen, in only his seventh game back after 25 games on the injured list after having bone spurs removed from his right ankle, was 16-for-27 from the field, dished out eight assists, and pulled down six rebounds.

Allen had given the Sonics a 104-102 lead when he hit a 3-pointer with 19.7 seconds left. Damon Stoudamire sent the game into overtime with a 22-footer with 1.1 seconds left.

Zach Randolph led Portland with 28 points, while Stoudamire added 22.

In Boston, Tayshaun Prince scored seven of his 13 points during a key 11-0 run in the fourth quarter and Detroit beat Boston, 78-68, holding the Celtics to a season-low point total.

The win was the sixth straight for the Pistons, who have held their opponents under 100 points in all 35 of their games this season. They have done it 37 consecutive times dating back to last season.

Boston also shot a season-low 29.3 percent in the game, including just 9-for-34 on 3-pointers.

Ben Wallace scored 12 points and grabbed 16 rebounds for Detroit, and Richard Hamilton scored 15 points.

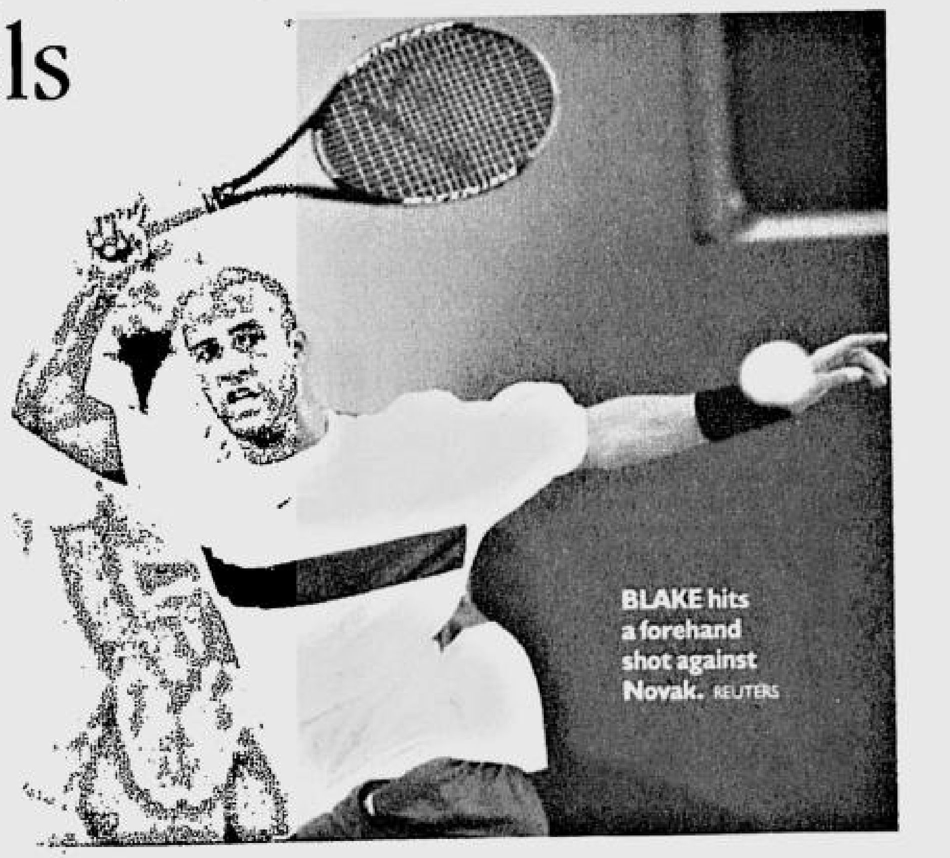
In Miami, Jermaine O'Neal had his eighth consecutive double-double with 22 points and 11 rebounds and Indiana earned its fifth win in a row by beating Miami, 87-65. *AP*

RACING TIPS

AT SANTA ANA BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Hello Happy 2. Modern Spirit 3. El Dorado/Scorpion King 4. He's A Balong 5. El Cid
Race 2—1. Regal Mischief 2. Art of Rose/Might and Power 3. Latin Beat
Race 3—1. Sunny Sky 2. Shotgun Banjo 3. Speed Mountain 4. Chase the Wind
Race 4—1. High Octane 2. Diktador 3. San Diego Force 4. Sambat/High Fidelity 5. Laughing Matter
Race 5—1. The Warrior 2. Cartada Nueve 3. Queen of Gaia
Race 6—1. Red Strip 2. Doña Gelay 3. Ann's Magic 4. Picture Perfect
Race 7—1. Nothing to Declare/Bunker Buster 2. Andee's Time 3. Gigi's Gold 4. Incrediview 5. Aminin
Race 8—1. Ichiro 2. D' Minnows 3. Mirame 4. Carlo's Charm 5. Princess Dancer
Race 9—1. Sovereign Queen 2. Gold Honors 3. Native Talent 4. Skip Away 5. Golden Moment 6. Latin Music

New-look Blake propels US past Czech netters



BLAKE hits a forehand shot against Novak. REUTERS

PERTH, Australia—Shorn of his trademark dreadlocks and playing in borrowed clothes, James Blake battled past Jiri Novak, 4-6, 6-1, 7-5, on Tuesday to hand the US victory over the Czech Republic in the Hopman Cup.

Dressed head to toe in spanking new kit and wearing brand new shoes—his luggage is somewhere between Los Angeles and Australia—the shaven-headed heartthrob had a few sticky moments at the Burswood Dome before dispatching the world No. 13.

"He's a top player and has had my number in the past . . . that's why I am so pleased to get the win," 37th-ranked Blake smiled courtside afterward.

Earlier, Lindsay Davenport—a late replacement for Serena Williams who partnered Blake to the title here last year—had put the Americans ahead with a 6-4, 6-3 over Barbora Strycova.

The Americans also teamed up to win the mixed doubles, 6-3, 6-2.

Former world number one Davenport made a tentative return to action after undergoing foot surgery last year.

"I am not prepared as well as I would like," she said. "I had surgery in mid-October and started hitting in December, so I am still a few weeks away from being where I want to be."

Blake's new look is partly down to charity—his locks will be auctioned at this month's Australian Open to raise money for a friend in the US who runs an inner-city basketball team—but he showed little goodwill to Novak despite looking rusty. *Reuters*

Mag-merienda Araw-araw!
₱20 Regular Yum
Buhay Jollibee. Lalong sumasarap.

Vazquez OKs $45-M, 4-year contract with Yankees

NEW YORK—Javier Vazquez and the New York Yankees agreed Monday to a $45-million, four-year contract.

The 27-year-old Puerto Rican right-hander, acquired from Montreal on Dec. 4, would have been eligible for free agency after next season, and the Yankees wanted a multiyear agreement.

Yankees general manager Brian Cashman and Vazquez's agents, Sam and Seth Levinson, worked Sunday and Monday to finalize the deal.

New York sent first baseman Nick Johnson, outfielder Juan Rivera and left-hander Randy Choate to the Expos for Vazquez. Right after the trade, the pitcher said he hoped to have a lengthy stay in New York.

"I want to be a Yankee for more than a year," he said then.

Vazquez went 13-12 with a 3.24 ERA and 241 strikeouts last season. He is part of the Yankees' new-look, all-righty rotation, a group that includes Mike Mussina, Kevin Brown, Jose Contreras and Jon Lieber.

Roger Clemens retired, Andy Pettitte went to the Houston Astros and David Wells joined the San Diego Padres. Pettitte and Wells are left-handers.

Vazquez was among three Yankees eligible for salary arbitration, a group that also includes second baseman Alfonso Soriano and left-hander Gabe White, who became a free agent and then accepted New York's arbitration offer.

The Yankees currently are leaning toward trying to negotiate a one-year contract with Soriano, eligible for arbitration for the first time. He made $800,000 last season, when the Yankees renewed his contract. *AP*

Headless singers, isolated booths and other boob-tube booboos

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HOST: How does it feel to be a singing champion?

Guest: *Hindi ko talaga* expect, promise!

Host: *Huwag lang lumaki ang ulo mo, ha?*

Guest: *Hindi, wala naman akong ulo, e!*

(You said it, we didn't!)

***

Host: How did you get started as a singer?

Guest: I started *sa* choir.

Host: You sang in church?

Guest: *Oo, 'yun ang* earliest *na pinaka*-memory *ko!*

(Thanks for the memory!)

***

Host: What about in show biz?

Guest: *Ang* first major break *ko sa* stage, *nung naging* kinder *ako—pero* lip-sync *lang.*

(Major break *ba ang tawag doon?*)

***

Host: No, when were you first noticed for your own singing voice?

Guest: Well, *una nilang nalaman na marunong akong kumanta nung binaboy ko ang kanta ni* Michael Jackson!

(We give up!)

***

Host: What about you (talks to other guest)? When did you first get interested in singing?

Guest 2: Oh, a long time ago, ever since I was a young!

(*Isa ka pa!*)

***

Host: What roles did you like to play when you were just starting your acting career?

Guest: Before, *gusto ko 'yung* role *na puno*—as in *punong kahoy.*

Host: You mean, like a tree?

Guest: *Ganoon na nga. Pero,* later *'yung mga* role *ko, umangat na—naging* egg!

(Cute!)

***

Host: Why do you think she was chosen by the judges to win the singing contest?

Guest: *Kasi*, obviously *naman na yung* high notes, powerful *niya talaga na abutin niya talaga!*

(*Talagang talaga!*)

***

Host: What happened to the fire victims there?

Field reporter: After the fire, the injured victims were hospitalized in Pasay City.

(You sound like you need some medical help yourself...)

***

Host: What are some new techniques to make older people look younger?

Guest: One of the ways is Botox injections.

Host: Really? What will injections in the buttocks do for the face?!

(Don't answer that question—please!)

> Host: Really? What will injections in the buttocks do for the face?!

***

Host: Now that we're down to our five finalists, what will happen next?

Co-host: For the very important question-and-answer portion, the finalists will be put inside the isolated booth!

(*Ay*, isolated booth!)

***

Host: Why did you join this gay beauty contest?

Contestant: Because I want to prove that there is a time to exist the homosexual—I thank you!

(You're welcome.)

***

Host: What about you, why did you join?

Contestant 2: To show that gays can succeed in different fields, and being accept for what they are—thank you!

(Thank you, too.)

***

Host: And what is your reason for joining?

Contestant 3: To expand the public awareness of gays, and understating, so that we can work in more professions, not just stay at home and making so many parlors—that's all, thank you!

(You people are so—grateful!)

Ramon Acoymo performs

DRAMATIC tenor **Ramon Acoymo** will perform at the annual treat for disadvantaged children of **Bibsy Carballo's** Snack Arts at SM North Edsa on Jan. 16.

On Jan. 24, Acoymo will sing in Makati with two other tenors, **Nolyn Cabahug** and **Randy Gillongo.**

Later this month, Acoymo will sing old sacred songs unearthed by UP musicologists, at a museum in Batangas.

Triple platinum

"ROUND 2," the second album by the Sex Bomb Girls, was recently recognized as a triple platinum album, having sold more than 90,000 copies nationwide.

Joining the Sex Bomb Girls during the awarding on "Eat Bulaga" on GMA 7 were BMG Records Pilipinas sales and marketing director Narciso Chan, marketing manager Mario Joson, and promotions coordinator Espie Eusebio, as well as Joy Cancio, manager of the Sex Bomb Girls.

"Round 2" features the popular dance tune "Spageti Song" with comedian-host Joey de Leon, which has become a national favorite among children as well as adults.

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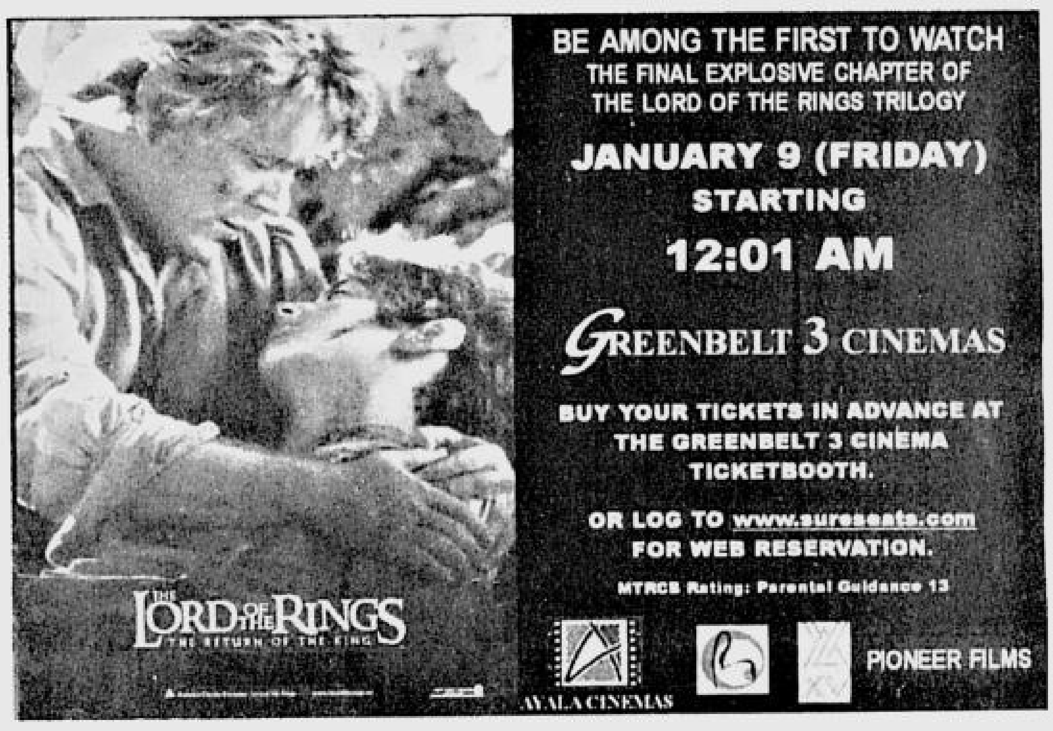
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CHRISTIAN VAZQUEZ RODEL VELAYO.
BOOTS ANSON ROA GINA PAREÑO
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"Absolutely the most enjoyable film among all entries!" -Billy Balbastro, Abante
"This movie heralds the renaissance of new Pinoy sex-comedy." -Jenina Ali, Phil. Daily Inquirer
"Bridal Shower succeeds in making us roar with laughter. A must-see!" -Mario Bautista, People's J.
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BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13
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Never in the history of Hollywood filmmaking has there been a film that garnered so many STARS from film critics.
★★★★
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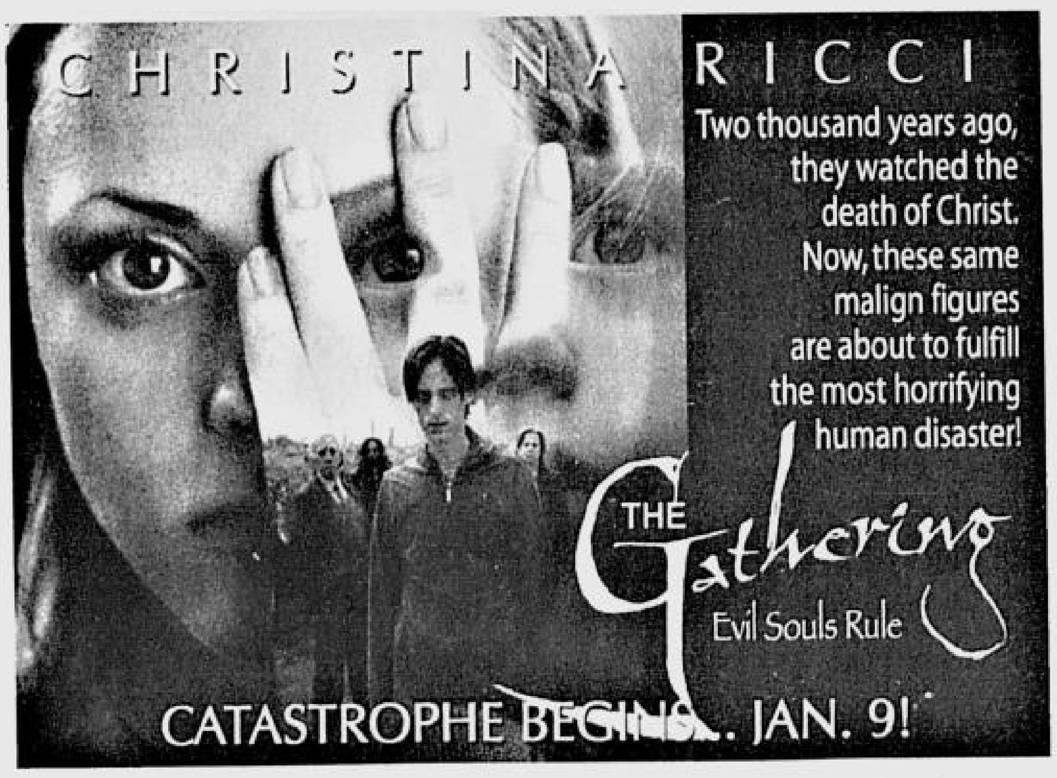
THE RETURN OF THE KING


CHRISTINA RICCI
Two thousand years ago, they watched the death of Christ. Now, these same malign figures are about to fulfill the most horrifying human disaster!
THE Gathering
Evil Souls Rule
CATASTROPHE BEGINS... JAN. 9!

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SM CITY NORTH EDSA
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1 MANO PO 2
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 FANTASTIC MAN
4 CAPTAIN BARBELL
5 MALIKMATA
6 CRYING LADIES
7 GAGAMBOY
8 FILIPINAS

SM CITY CEBU
2313676

1 CRYING LADIES
2 FANTASTIC MAN
3 GAGAMBOY
4 FILIPINAS
5 BRIDAL SHOWER
6 MANO PO 2
7 MALIKMATA
8 CAPTAIN BARBELL

SM CITY BACOOR
4173368

1 FILIPINAS
2 MANO PO 2
3 FANTASTIC MAN
4 BRIDAL SHOWER
5 CAPTAIN BARBELL
6 GAGAMBOY
7 MALIKMATA
8 CRYING LADIES

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1 FANTASTIC MAN
2 CAPTAIN BARBELL
3 BRIDAL SHOWER
4 GAGAMBOY
5 MALIKMATA
6 CRYING LADIES

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975

1 CRYING LADIES
2 CAPTAIN BARBELL
3 BRIDAL SHOWER
4 FILIPINAS

SM BICUTAN
7763655

1 GAGAMBOY
2 MALIKMATA
3 MANO PO 2
4 CAPTAIN BARBELL

SM CITY MARILAO

1 MALIKMATA
2 FANTASTIC MAN
3 CAPTAIN BARBELL
4 GAGAMBOY

SM STA. MESA
7148522 • 7161416

1 MANO PO 2
2 MALIKMATA
3 CAPTAIN BARBELL
4 BRIDAL SHOWER
5 FANTASTIC MAN
6 GAGAMBOY
7 CRYING LADIES
8 BRIDAL SHOWER
9 GAGAMBOY
10 FILIPINAS

SM SOUTHMALL
8065088

1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 FILIPINAS
3 CRYING LADIES
4 CAPTAIN BARBELL
5 GAGAMBOY
6 BNDAL SHOWER
7 MALIKMATA
8 FANTASTIC MAN
9 GAGAMBOY
10 MANO PO 2

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9359749

1 FANTASTIC MAN
2 GAGAMBOY
3 CAPTAIN BARBELL
4 BRIDAL SHOWER
5 CAPTAIN BARBELL
6 FANTASTIC MAN
7 MANO PO 2
8 CRYING LADIES
9 GAGAMBOY
10 MALIKMAFA
11 BRIDAL SHOWER
12 FILIPINAS

SM CITY DAVAO
2976993

1 MANO PO 2
2 CAPTAIN BARBELL
3 FANTASTIC MAN
4 FILIPINAS
5 BRIDAL SHOWER
6 CRYING LADIES

SM CITY LUCENA
(042) 7108077-80

1 CAPTAIN BARBELL
2 CRYING LADIES
3 MANO PO 2
4 GAGAMBOY

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1 MANO PO 2
RESERVE-A-SEAT dial 6366100
2 CRYING LADIES
3 CAPTAIN BARBELL
4 MANO PO 2
5 BRIDAL SHOWER
6 GAGAMBOY
7 BRIDAL SHOWER
8 CRYING LADIES
9 MALIKMATA
10 FANTASTIC MAN
11 GAGAMBOY
12 FILIPINAS

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514362

1 CAPTAIN BARBELL
2 CRYING LADIES
3 FANTASTIC MAN
4 BRIDAL SHOWER

SM CITY ILOILO
3203422

1 MALIKMATA
2 RESERVED
3 BRIDAL SHOWER
4 GAGAMBOY
5 CRYING LADIES
6 MANO PO 2
7 RESERVED
8 CAPTAIN BARBELL

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 FANTASTIC MAN
3 MANO PO 2
4 GAGAMBOY
5 MALIKMATA
6 CRYING LADIES
7 BRIDAL SHOWER
8 FILIPINAS
9 CAPTAIN BARBELL
10 CRYING LADIES
11 GAGAMBOY
12 MALIKMATA

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
(088) 8590884

1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 CRYING LADIES
3 CAPTAIN BARBELL
4 MANO PO 2

SM CITY BAGUIO
(074) 4464585

1 MANO PO 2
2 MALIKMATA
3 CRYING LADIES
4 GAGAMBOY

THE PODIUM CINEMA

18 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City • 638 9781 - 85

1 CRYING LADIES
12:20 FS/12:50 MF/3:15/5:40/8:05/10:00 LFS/10:35 LMF/12:30 END

2 BRIDAL SHOWER
11:30 FS/12:00 MF/2:40/5:20/8:00/10:15 LFS/10:40 LMF/12:55 END

For Seat Reservation, call 633 8976 • LATE NIGHT SCREENING DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS

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Galleria
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687-0593

THX /All Digital

1 CRYING LADIES 11:10, 1:45, 4:20, 6:55, 9:30 THX
4 FANTASTIC MAN 10:35, 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
2 MANO PO 2 11:10, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 9:50
5 BRIDAL SHOWER 11:10, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 9:50
3 CAPTAIN BARBELL 11:30, 2:05, 4:40, 7:15, 9:50
6 GAGAMBOY 10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
7 HOMECOMING 12:20, 2:30, 4:40, 6:50, 9:00
9 FILIPINAS 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
8 MALIKMATA 12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 9:30
10 CRYING LADIES 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00

MATINEE PRICE: P100 THX cinema / P75 1level cinemas
Mon.- Fri. / 10am- 4pm (EXCEPT HOLIDAYS)

Ermita
526-7185
536-7809 to 12

1 MANO PO 2 - 11:10, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 10:00
2 FANTASTIC MAN - 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00
3 MALIKMATA - 10:40, 12:50, 3:00, 5:10, 7:20, 9:50
4 BRIDAL SHOWER - 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00
5 CAPTAIN BARBEL - 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00
6 GAGAMBOY - 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00
7 CRYING LADIES - 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00

Metro East
Marcos hway
682-8193/99
682-8280

1 MALIKMATA
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 MANO PO 2
4 FILIPINAS
5 CRYING LADIES
6 CAPTAIN BARBELL
7 FANTASTIC MAN
8 GAGAMBOY

Novaliches
935-3229 / 31

1 FANTASTIC MAN
2 FILIPINAS
3 MALIKMATA
4 CRYING LADIES
5 CAPTAIN BARBELL
6 MANO PO 2
7 BRIDAL SHOWER
8 GAGAMBOY

Cainta
Brgy. Sto. Domingo, Ortigas Extension

1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 CRYING LADIES
3 GAGAMBOY
4 FANTASTIC MAN

Malabon
[illegible]
288-0985/2575

1 CRYING LADIES
2 CAPTAIN BARBELL
3 BRIDAL SHOWER
4 GAGAMBOY

Sta. Rosa Laguna (049)837-0907		Lipa, Batangas [illegible] (043)757-3664/312-5870
FANTASTIC MAN	1	MANO PO 2
FILIPINAS	2	FILIPINAS
MALIKMATA	3	CAPTAIN BARBELL
GAGAMBOY	4	MALIKMATA
CAPTAIN BARBELL	5	CRYING LADIES

Dasmariñas		Imus (046)471-8188 / 875-5858
GAGAMBOY	1	FANTASTIC MAN
CRYING LADIES	2	CAPTAIN BARBELL
FANTASTIC MAN	3	CRYING LADIES
CAPTAIN BARBELL	4	MANO PO 2
MALIKMATA	5	FILIPINAS
	6	GAGAMBOY

Bacolod (034)441-0458/59		Iloilo (033)336-8070 to 78
MANO PO 2	1	MANO PO 2
FILIPINAS	2	FILIPINAS
GAGAMBOY	3	CAPTAIN BARBELL
CRYING LADIES	4	BRIDAL SHOWER
MALIKMATA	5	GAGAMBOY
ELF	6	CRYING LADIES

Star Mills
San Fernando Pampanga
(045)875-1927
(045)961-5270

1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 CAPTAIN BARBELL
3 FILIPINAS
4 GAGAMBOY
5 CRYING LADIES
6 MANO PO 2

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Mag-merienda Araw-araw!
P25 Arroz Caldo
Buhay Jollibee. Lalong sumasarap.

DID YOU KNOW...

Actor Ryan Eigenmann, son of Michael de Mesa, was seen at the Metrobank ATM on Aguirre Avenue at BF Homes Parañaque one afternoon.

MTRCB ▶ G ALL AGES ADMITTED

BEST PICTURE

(Gatpuno Antonio J. Villegas Cultural Awardee)

Best Actress- Maricel Soriano
Best Actor- Richard Gomez
(Smart People's Choice for Best Actor)
Best Supporting Actor- Victor Neri
Best Screenplay- Roy Iglesias

Wagi sa Awards!
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Filipinas
Gabi ng Parangal
VIVA

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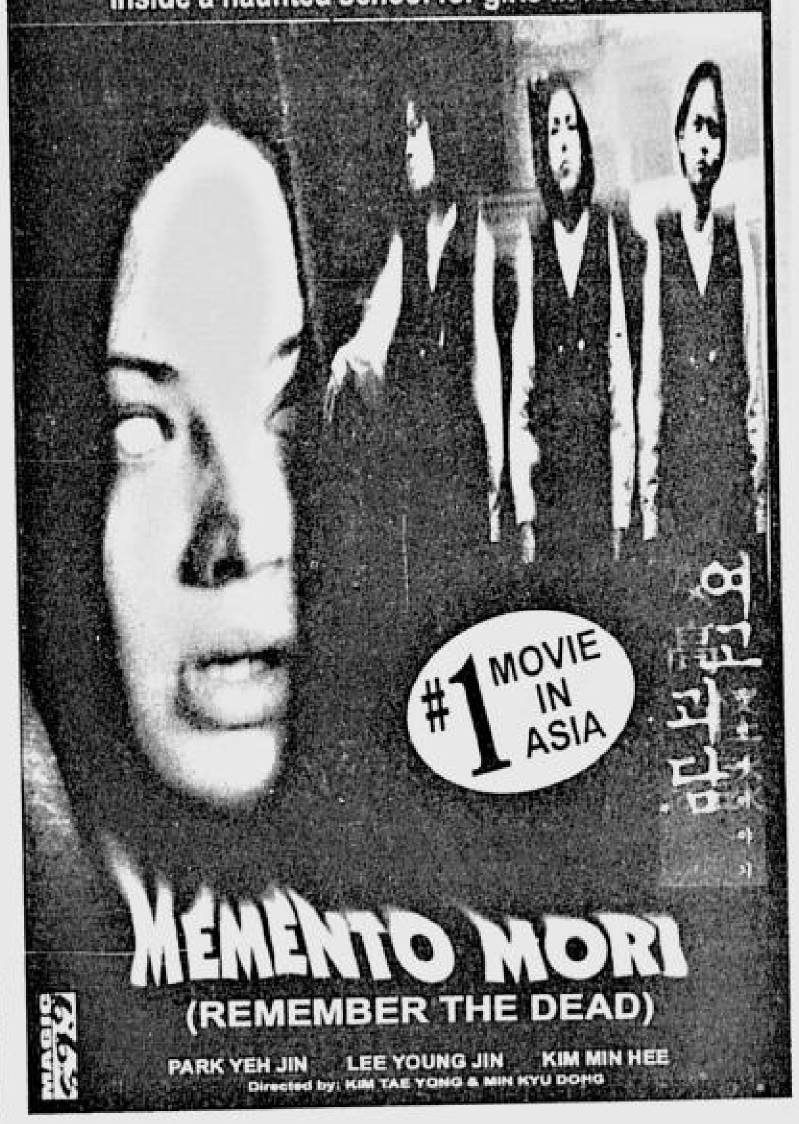
From MIRO VISION, the company that gave you THE PHONE. Based on a shocking true story that happened inside a haunted school for girls in Korea.



CONGRATULATIONS BOSSING, ANG NO. 1 FANTASTIC SUPERHERO NG BAYAN

MTRCB ▶ G GENERAL PATRONAGE ALL AGES ADMITTED

ARA MINA
MICHAEL V.
ZOREN LEGASPI
LEO MARTINEZ
DANICA SOTTO
INTRODUCING ALICIA MAYER
VIC SOTTO
FANTASTIC MAN
TONY Y. REYES, DGPI
ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK FROM OCTOARTS - ORBIT MUSIC
NOW SHOWING!

Annabel Rama: Nieveras . . .

From page A26

Carol admitted to her that she and Bert were running short of money.

"Carol told me that she pawned most of her jewelry, as well as the Rolex watches of her husband and son," Annabel said. "I stopped selling jewelry to her then, but it was too late."

Annabel added, "I was shocked when I found out that they were gone. *Para akong nilagnat*. I could not sleep well."

Country Waffles investor Franco Laurel said the Nieveras tried to borrow money from him and his wife Ayen Munji-Laurel two months before the couple flew to the States.

Franco said, "If they feel that they don't have enough money, why are they living beyond their means? How come all of a sudden, they are driving luxury cars and living in high-end condominiums? I'm not questioning their wealth, I'm just curious about the sudden change in their lifestyle."

According to Franco, Bert is a "good friend" of Ayen's musician father, Emy Munji. "That was why we trusted them with our money," he said.

He said the Nieveras never gave them and the other investors of Country Waffles copies of the restaurants' quarterly and annual financial reports.

"What happened to the money?" Franco asked. "Why can't they pay their employees?"

"They (investors) said a new group will handle the business and will be more strict in monitoring operations," an employee of Country Waffles said yesterday.

"*Nabuhayan kami ng loob*," the employee added.

Country Waffles workers earlier admitted taking implements from the restaurant because they have not been paid their salaries for as long as five months now.

Keith Martin . . .

From page A26

Keith Eric Martin was born and raised in Washington DC. The second of three children, he said the whole clan was into the arts and music. One cousin is the legendary Stevie Wonder, he said.

"My dad played R&B guitar and my mom sang in gospel choirs," he said. "I wound up doing a mixture of the two."

He co-wrote and co-produced the 15 cuts in "Validated," his second album.

His first album, "Long Overdue," released in 1995, included "Because of You." Keith is grateful that local artists such as Kyla, G24/7, and most of all, Jimmy Bondoc, have of late popularized the song.

"Validated" is not available locally, and copies will be sold only during his concerts in Manila and Cebu.

Greg Gali, owner of the G-Music label, said Keith's third album, "Ballads and B-Sides," is "ready to go."

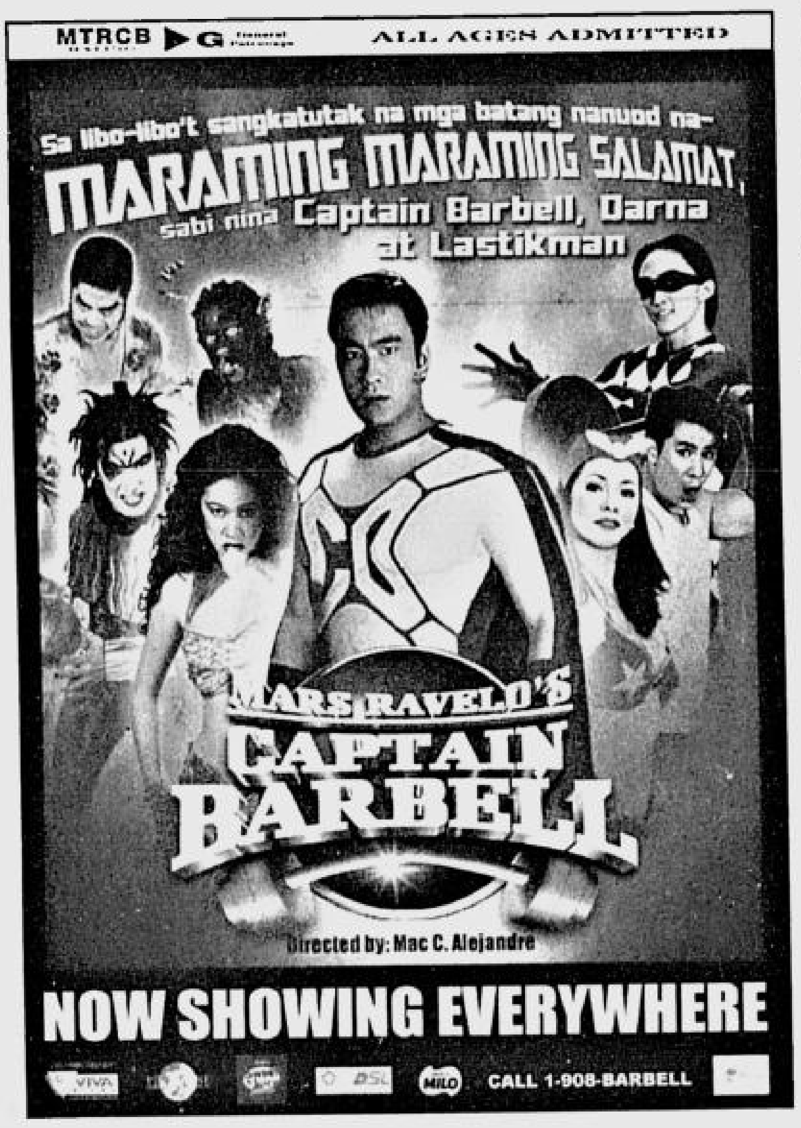
Keith performs at the Meralco Theater on Jan. 8, 9 and 10. The shows are part of Mossimo's fifth anniversary, and will be for the benefit of the GMA Kapuso Foundation's project to rehabilitate school buildings and build mini-libraries in the war-torn parts of Mindanao.

To perform with Keith on all three nights in Manila are the Passage band, Jimmy Bondoc, Paolo Santos and Jay-R. On Jan. 8, they will be joined by former Mojofly vocalist Kitchie Nadal, former South Border vocalist Luke Mejares, Medwin Marfil of Truefaith, Sarah Geronimo, Rebekah, Silk, the all-male vocal group Akafellas, Pido with Take One, and the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra.

All the local artists agreed to waive their talent fees in support of the GMA Kapuso Foundation project.

For ticket information, call Ticketworld at 891-5610.

For information on Keith, check out www.g-music.net. Fans may also write him at newperspectivemusic@yahoo.com.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CINEMA 2 CRYING LADIES - P13 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00 Advance Selling - LOTR 3 (P150)
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA • 7224496

MUSIC MUSEUM
JAN 9 2004 "KYLA RECALL" 8:30 PM
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POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

BRIDAL SHOWER R13 2:10, 4:50, 7:30, 10:10	GAGAMBOY GP 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00	MANO PO 2 GP 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00
CRYING LADIES PG13 12:20, 2:50, 5:20, 7.50, 10:20	BRIDAL SHOWER R13 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30	FILIPINAS GP 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

Mag-merienda Araw-araw!
P32 Spaghetti Special

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	GAGAMBOY
Ali 2	FANTASTIC MAN
Ali 3	CAPTAIN BARBEL
Ali 4	CRYING LADIES
Ali 5	MALIKMATA
Ali 6	MANO PO 2
Ali 7	BRIDAL SHOWER

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JAN 12	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
JAN 14	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
JAN 19	WORLD SLASHER CUP 2004
JAN 20	DAVID GATES CONCERT
JAN 21	WORLD SLASHER CUP 2004
JAN 23	WORLD SLASHER CUP 2004
FEB 2	NCA 7-COCK DERBY

FOR TICKETS. CALL TICKETNET AT 911-5555

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	BRIDAL SHOWER
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	BRIDAL SHOWER
B	GAGAMBOY
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BIKTIMA
CINEMA-2	ALIPIN
CINEMA-3	WAG KANG KIKIBO
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MR. SUAVE
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	LORD OF THE RINGS 1
CINEMA-6	CHAVIT
CINEMA-7	BABAE SA BREAKWATER
CINEMA-8	ASBOOBS
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	LOST ISLAND
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LORDS OF THE RINGS 2
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	STAR RUNNER
CINEMA-12	CABIN FEVER
CINEMA-14	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
CINEMA-15	ELF

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PINAS)	OUT OF TIME
CINEMA-1	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
CINEMA-2	FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
CINEMA-4	COLD CREEK MANOR

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

ALL DIGITAL SOUND
AYALA CINEMAS PRESENTS

G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB1 GREENBELT 1	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1 MANO PO 2	1 MANO PO 2	ArtFilm 1 GAGAMBOY	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 1 MANO PO 2 2:30 3:00 5:30 8:00 10:30	THX 1 CRYING LADIES
2 FANTASTIC MAN	2 FILIPINAS	2 BRIDAL SHOWER	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 CRYING LADIES 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00 11:30	2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 BRIDAL SHOWER	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 BRIDAL SHOWER 11:30 2:15 5:00 7:45 10:30	Onstage M. BUTTERFLY Jan. 9, 10 & 11	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 FILIPINAS 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00 11:30	3 MANO PO 2
4 CAPTAIN BARBEL	4 MALIKMATA		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 BRIDAL SHOWER 12:15 3:00 5:45 8:30 11:15	4 FILIPINAS
	5 GAGAMBOY		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 MALIKMATA 1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30	5 GAGAMBOY
	6 CRYING LADIES			
	7 CAPTAIN BARBEL			

For screening times, call 729-7777. Movies are subject to change without prior notice.
~~Reserve your seats by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 and send to 2333.~~
Or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING
EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA (Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (SDDS) CAPT. BARBEL
2 (SDDS) MALIKMATA
3 (DTS) FANTASTIC MAN
4 GOLD (DTS) MANO PO-2
5 GOLD (DOLBY) CRYING LADIES
6 GOLD (SDDS) FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL
7 GOLD (DOLBY) MANO PO-2
8 CRYING LADIES
9 BRIDAL SHOWER
10 GAGAMBOY

EASTWOOD CINEMAS (Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) CRYING LADIES
2 (DOLBY) MANO PO
3 (DOLBY) GAGAMBOY
4 (DOLBY) FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL

Masagana CINEMA (Pasay) tel 833.3290 833.3274
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 FANTASTIC MAN

starmall Movies www.clickthecity.com.ph (Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986
1 GAGAMBOY
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 FANTASTIC MAN
CAPT. BARBEL
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) MANO PO-2
5

METROPOLIS star www.clickthecity.com.ph (Alabang) tel 850.4285
1 GAGAMBOY
2 CRYING LADIES
3 FANTASTIC MAN
4 BRIDAL SHOWER
5 MALIKMATA
6 CAPT. BARBEL

M star www.clickthecity.com.ph (Las Pinas) tel 873.5004
1 FANTASTIC MAN
2 CAPT BARBEL

PREMIERE CINEMA (Makati City) tel 892.2503 THX

Centre Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 MALIKMATA
2 CAPT BARBEL

Sunshine (FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 FANTASTIC MAN
4 GAGAMBOY

GOTESCO CINEMA
Gotesco City (Manila) tel 734.8588
5 GAGAMBOY
6 CAPT. BARBEL
7 (DTS) CRYING LADIES
8 (SDDS) FANTASTIC MAN
9 (DOLBY) BRIDAL SHOWER

Gotesco Grand Central (Caloocan) tel 364.3781
1 MANO PO-2
2 BRIDAL SHOWER
3 FANTASTIC MAN
4 (SDDS) GAGAMBOY
5 MALIKMATA
6 (DOLBY) CRYING LADIES
7 (DTS) CAPT. BARBEL
8 BRIDAL SHOWER
9 FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL

Gotesco Commonwealth tel 951.0083
1 CAPT. BARBEL
2 (SDDS) BRIDAL SHOWER
3 (DTS) FANTASTIC MAN
4 (DOLBY) GAGAMBOY
5 MANO PO-2

Gotesco Ortigas tel 656.6795
1 GAGAMBOY
2 FANTASTIC MAN
3 (DTS) CAPT. BARBEL
4 MANO PO-2
5 (SDDS) BRIDAL SHOWER

Universal (Manila) tel 733.2470
1 RESERVE

Dilson (Manila) tel 734.7724
Dilson FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL
Lords BRIDAL SHOWER

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 MALIKMATA
3 GAGAMBOY
4 CAPT. BARBEL

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto SUPER CINERAMA tel 733.4238
1 (DOLBY) MANO PO-2
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 MALIKMATA
4 GAGAMBOY
5 FANTASTIC MAN

Berma Cinema (Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 CAPT. BARBEL
2 GAGAMBOY

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT Araneta Center
ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7
1 MANO PO-2
2 FANTASTIC MAN
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL) CAPT. BARBEL
4 (SDDS) CRYING LADIES
5 (DTS) MALIKMATA
6 GAGAMBOY
7 BRIDAL SHOWER
8
9

Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) FANTASTIC MAN
2 FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL
3 (DTS EX) MANO PO-2
4 CAPT BARBEL

Cine Nepo (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 FILIPINAS KONG MAHAL
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 (DOLBY) FANTASTIC MAN
4 (DTS) MANO PO-2

Cine Nepo (Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 MANO PO-2
2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 (DOLBY) MALIKMATA
4 (DTS) GAGAMBOY

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2 CAPT. BARBEL
3 (DTS) BRIDAL SHOWER

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1 BRIDAL SHOWER
2 (DTS) MALIKMATA
3 (DOLBY) FANTASTIC MAN
4 MANO PO-2

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1 CAPT. BARBEL
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3 (DTS) MALIKMATA
4 GAGAMBOY

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 GAGAMBOY
2 FANTASTIC MAN
3 (DOLBY) CRYING LADIES

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3 (DOLBY) FANTASTIC MAN
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3 (DTS) FANTASTIC MAN
4 (DOLBY) GAGAMBOY

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1 (DTS) CAPT. BARBEL

Fiesta World Mall (Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
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2 MALIKMATA
3 FANTASTIC MAN
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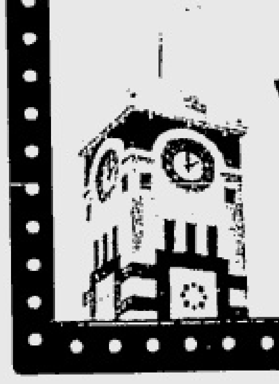
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Editor Louie C. Camino

Annabel Rama: Nieveras owe me ₱8M

Mag-merienda Araw-araw!
₱42 Palabok Fiesta
Jollibee
Langhap sarap

By Marinel R. Cruz and Tina Santos

FORMER movie star Annabel Rama yesterday confirmed that singer Bert Nievera and his wife Carol, franchise operators of the Country Waffles chain of restaurants, owe her more than P8 million worth of jewelry.

Annabel, the mother of movie star siblings Ruffa and Richard Gutierrez, said the amount was what was left of the P90 million that the couple originally owed her.

She said that as early as October 2003, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) had called her to get a statement about the Nieveras. But she did not cooperate with the NBI because the Nieveras had promised to pay their debts, Annabel said.

She said other people had also complained about the Nieveras, prompting the NBI to investigate.

Annabel revealed this to INQUIRER Entertainment yesterday even as Country Waffles investors said they are willing to invest more money to save the business.

"We're back to normal, we will revive (Country Waffles) and we will survive," a Country Waffles employee quoted the investors as saying following a meeting on Monday night.

The employee added that the investors would soon take legal action against the Nieveras, who flew to the US just before Christmas, allegedly leaving millions of pesos in debts to several people.

Pair of earrings

Annabel said the Nieveras had given her four luxury cars as part of their payment, but she discovered that they have not fully paid for the cars. She said she found out only yesterday that the Nieveras were supposed to pay for the cars for three years and have not been able to do so for four months now.

RAMA FILE PHOTO

"I'm willing to continue paying for the cars," Annabel said yesterday. "I just feel sad. *Wala nga akong utang sa kotse ko*, now I have this."

She said she met Bert and Carol two years ago through her husband, actor Eddie Gutierrez. She first sold Carol a pair of earrings through a common friend. When she received the payment on time, she started to sell more pieces of jewelry to Carol directly, she said.

"In the beginning, all her checks were good," Annabel said. "It was only about a year and a half ago when the checks started bouncing. I got angry at her and even threatened her. I told her I would tell 'TV Patrol.'"

She said Carol met with her and promised to pay for the jewelry. It was then that Carol gave her a Ford Expedition, a Honda CRV and two Mercedes Benzes, said Annabel.

"I guess my only fault was that I didn't bother to check the papers with the bank," Annabel said.

Ruffa's jewels

She said that last Dec. 23, Carol was seen at a pawnshop in Parañaque with "a Chinese-looking man" redeeming the jewels she had pawned. "She must have sold everything to that man," said Annabel. "She was gone the next day."

The Nieveras had brought the Country Waffles chain to the Philippines, opening the first local branch in Greenhills, San Juan. They also franchised the Country Waffles branches in Quezon City, Makati and another set to open in Alabang, Muntinlupa.

According to an investor, the restaurant's branches in Rockwell in Makati and in Greenhills were closed down last November and December, respectively.

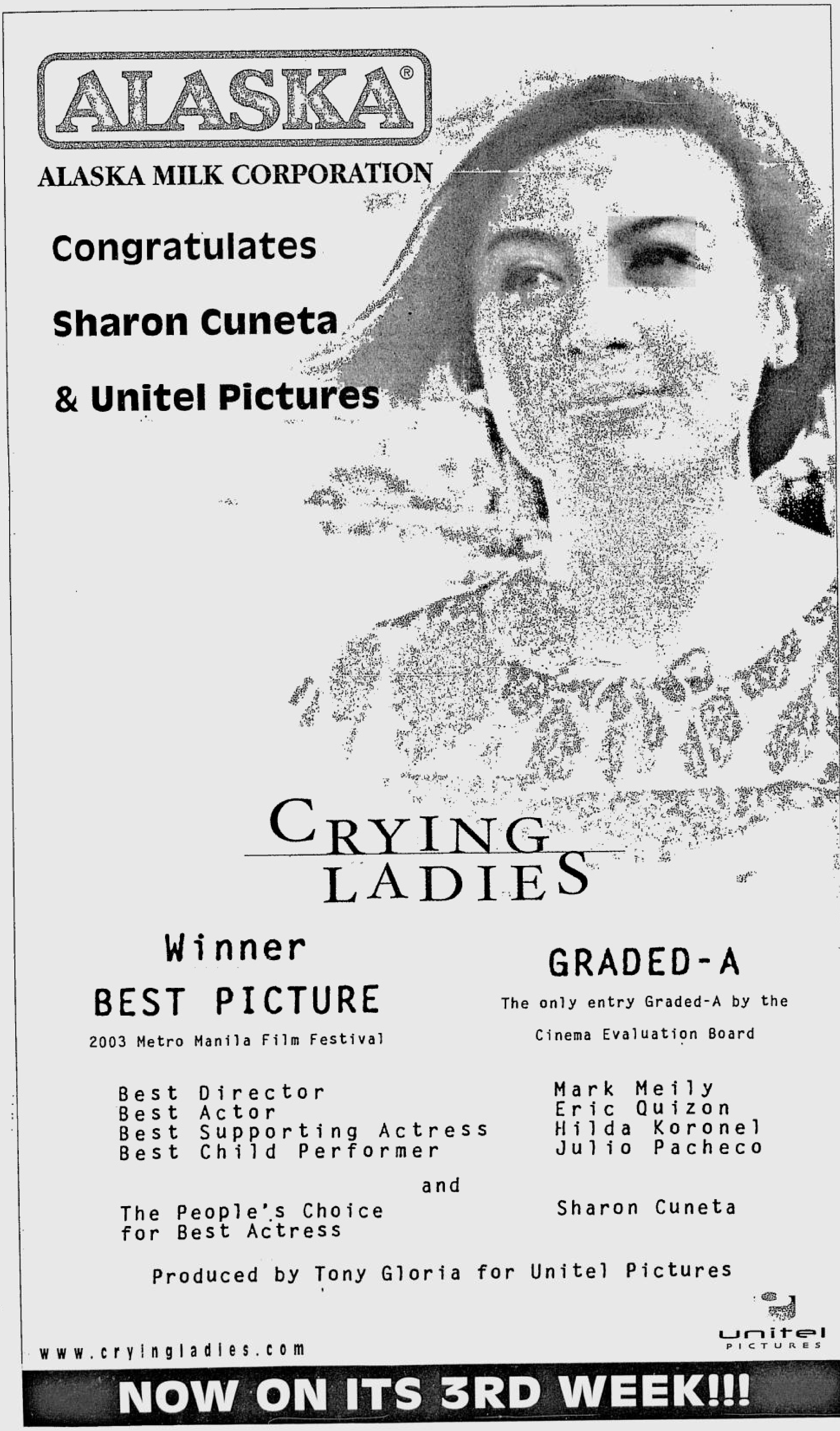
Annabel said most of the jewels she sold Carol were originally owned by her daughter Ruffa. Carol used to buy from her every week, she said.

"*Kapag may nakita siyang alahas na suot ni* Ruffa, *tinatawagan ako, ipinapahubad niya*," said Annabel. "*Minsan, ipinapahubad din niya ang suot ko sa banyo*. My other mistake was that I allowed her to pay for the jewelry for 10 months. That was too long."

Lifestyle change

She said that as early as eight months ago,

ANNABEL/ A25



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NOW ON ITS 3RD WEEK!!!

Keith Martin no stranger to Filipinos

By Claire Agbayani
Contributor

TO INTERVIEW Keith Martin, whom we know only through the lone cut "Because of You," I was brought to High Moon, a studio on Montreal off New York—in Cubao, Quezon City, that is, at the back of the Baliwag Bus station.

MARTIN

I committed a blooper: I shook someone's hand, thinking he was Keith. Turned out it was Keith's manager, Ruben Harper. Well, I couldn't tell them apart at first sight.

When Keith arrived at the airport last Sunday morning, Nana Nadal, his "official nanny" in the Philippines, was pleasantly surprised to find the American greeting everyone, "*Kumusta ka*?" He also knows "*Mabuti*," "*Ayos ba*?" and "*Salamat*."

"I've already experienced the culture before coming here," Keith said. "Name it, I eat it," including the ultimate "test"—*balut*.

He also mentioned, *bulalo*, jelly desserts, and roast pig (*lechon*). But he says his favorite is "crispy shrimp."

Back in California where he lives, his friends include a lot of Filipinos. He has had two Filipina girlfriends, he said. "Filipino women are gorgeous," he said. "They've got the best of both worlds—Asian and Latin."

KEITH A25

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Inflation stays below 2003 target

By Doris C. Dumlao

CONSUMER prices stabilized in December despite the seasonal spending spree during the holidays, with inflation easing to 3.1 percent from 3.3 percent the previous month.

This brought the country's full-year average inflation rate to 3.1 percent, or way below the government's ceiling of 4.5-5.5 percent.

For 2004, Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri said the government had set its inflation rate target range at 4-5 percent.

The National Statistics Office reported yesterday that for the month of December, all the commodity groups posted lower inflation rates except for housing and repairs, which remained at the previous month's rate of 3.1 percent.

Neri noted that fuel and meat prices largely caused the inflation pressure for the month.

The inflation rate for food, beverage and tobacco slid to 2.4 percent from 2.5 percent; clothing, to 2.3 percent from 2.4 percent; fuel, light and water, to 6.2 percent from 6.9 percent; services, to 5.5 percent from 5.6 percent, and miscellaneous, to 1.9 percent from 2 percent.

For food alone, the index eased to 2.4 percent in December from 2.6 percent in November due to slower rates in the prices of corn, cereal preparations, dairy products, fish, fruits and vegetables and miscellaneous foods. On the other hand, there was an uptick in the indices for rice, eggs and meat.

The year-on-year index for consumer prices eased in the National Capital Region alone to 4.2 percent in December from 5.1 percent in November, while that for areas outside the NCR inched up to 2.7 percent from 2.6 percent.

The highest inflation rate was posted in the Cordillera Autonomous Region at 6.2 percent while Cagayan Valley recorded the lowest inflation rate at 1.5 percent.

On a month-on-month basis, the country's inflation rate increased to 0.3 percent from 0.2 percent in November as demand for meat and fish surged during the holiday season.

Prices of fuel and meat increased from the previous month by 1.8 percent and 1.5 percent, respectively, due to the rise in imported crude oil prices and increased demand during the holiday season, respectively. Dubai crude oil prices increased by 1.6 percent in November in anticipation of a winter cut in production.

Meanwhile, market prices of beef rump, beef brisket, pork ham, and pork liempo increased from a low of 0.6 percent to a high of 4.5 percent in response to the holiday demand. Chicken prices increased dramatically by 14.8 percent due to tight supply as producers slaughtered culled chicken prior to December due to the high cost of feeds.

But due to ample supply, prices of vegetables increased modestly (0.3 percent) while prices of some products such as corn, vegetables such as cabbage, carrots, tomatoes, white potato, and fruits decreased.

Despite the lower-than-expected inflation rate for the whole of 2003, Neri said the government would keep its target of 4-5 percent for this year.

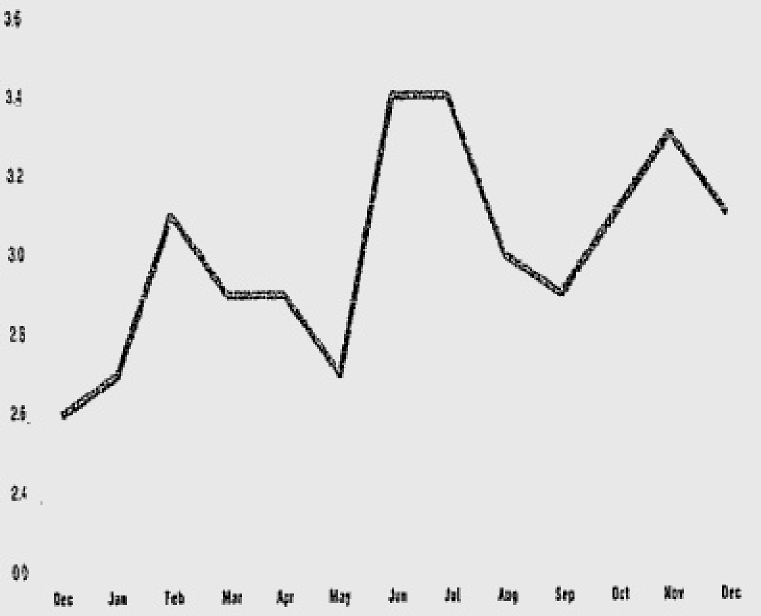
In a memorandum to President Macapagal-Arroyo, Neri said the 2004 target considered the impact of the continuing high prices of Dubai crude oil ($28.10 a barrel), the lagged effect of the weaker peso in 2003, adjustments in electricity prices, and possible wage pressures.

The benign inflation rate for 2003 was brought about by adequate food supplies, particularly rice, the country's staple, said Jose Vistan, economist of AB Capital Securities Inc., adding it had been "a relatively good year for the Philippines in terms of weather."

"There wasn't enough pressure to push prices (up) and there was adequate supply, particularly for poultry throughout the year. Some of the food companies were actually worried there would be a glut," Vistan said.

Vistan said the low inflation was "really more positive than negative ... given that the weight of the (consumer price index) is heavy on items that are very basic in nature and addresses the need of the bigger majority, the poor." He added the low inflation rate also helped to keep interest rates down.

INFLATION RATES
December 2002 to December 2003



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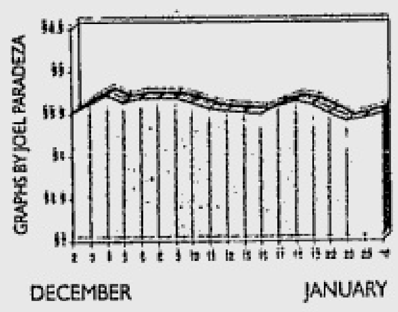


PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 55.11 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Jan.6, 2003

¥ 106.34 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Jan. 6, 2003

GOLD: $422.10-422.60
per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 6, 2003

January 6, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.789391	1.000000	55.361000
Japan	Yen	0.007431	0.009414	0.521200
United Kingdom	Pound	1.426113	1.806600	100.015200
Hongkong	Dollar	0.101692	0.128824	7.131800
Switzerland	Franc	0.640064	0.810833	44.888500
Canada	Dollar	0.616326	0.780762	43.223800
Singapore	Dollar	0.464976	0.589032	32.609400
Australia	Dollar	0.605872	0.767519	42.490600
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.093930	2.652590	146.850000
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.210510	0.266674	14.763300
Brunei	Dollar	0.463611	0.587303	32.513700
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000094	0.000119	0.006600
Thailand	Baht	0.020092	0.025452	1.409000
UAE	Dirham	0.214929	0.272272	15.073300
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.266800	70.131300
Argentina	Peso	0.274094	0.347222	19.222600
Brazil	Real	0.276494	0.350263	19.390900
Denmark	Kroner	0.134252	0.170071	9.415300
India	Rupee	0.017349	0.021978	1.216700
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.207762	0.263193	14.570600
Mexico	New Peso	0.071685	0.090810	5.027300
New Zealand	Dollar	0.530006	0.671411	37.170000
Korea	Won	0.000662	0.000839	0.046400
Sweden	Kroner	0.110218	0.139624	7.729700
Syria	Pound	0.017839	0.022599	1.251100
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023355	0.029586	1.637900

Shares surge 3.05%

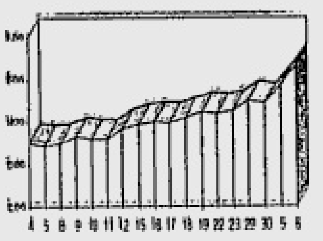
SHARE prices closed up 3.05 percent at 33-month high yesterday, supported by strong gains on Wall Street overnight and hopes for solid earnings for the key blue chips, dealers said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 45.40 points to 1,532.74, its high for the day and highest finish since March 12, 2001, when it closed at 1,567.53.

Turnover rose to 674.9 million shares worth P1.56 billion from 195.96 million shares worth P774.36 million on Monday.

Gainers outnumbered losers 55 to 13, while 36 stocks were unchanged.

AFP



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Meralco to seek debt rollover

DISTRIBUTION giant Manila Electric Co. expects another rollover of close to P5.3 billion in short-term debts that are maturing this month, company president Jesus Francisco said yesterday.

In a telephone interview, Francisco said the utility's finance officials were in talks with creditors on another possible six-month extension of the loans.

"There would probably be a partial payment just like the previous rollover. We hope this would be minimal," Francisco said.

The official added that Meralco was also negotiating for the loans to be termed out, which means a conversion to long-term payments.

"But we might not have a term-out until we are allowed to float bonds," Francisco said.

He was referring to a planned $200-million bond float that Meralco officials last month said was one of several options the company was considering to raise its financing needs.

If creditors agree, the rollover would be the third following the extensions granted in July and in April last year.

Last July, Meralco made a partial payment of P700 million on about P5.5 billion in short-term debts owed to Citibank, BPI Capital, Equitable-PCI and Banco de Oro.

"The amount is now close to P5.3 billion considering that the peso has depreciated to more than P55 against the dollar," Francisco explained, saying that some of the loans were dollar-denominated.

The extension of the loans would ease pressure on Meralco, which is facing tight cash flow due to a Supreme Court-ordered, P30-billion refund to customers.

The High Court had disallowed Meralco's recovery of income tax costs from customers, who were charged for this with 16.7 centavos per kilowatt-hour between February 1994 and April 2003.

Ronnel W. Domingo

Gov't keeps '03 budget deficit within target

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE GOVERNMENT yesterday announced that the budget deficit in 2003 reached only P198.7 billion against a target of P202 billion. However, it indicated that the gap between revenues and expenditures in December was three times more than the P12.3-billion monthly ceiling.

"As of Jan.5, the budget deficit last year is at P198.7 billion. Definitely the final number would be below P200 billion. That is fiscal discipline for you," said Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin said the preliminary level ranged between P196-P198 billion. She admitted that spending substantially exceeded the P63.3-billion ceiling in December.

"We settled our account payables. For the public works alone, we paid about P3 billion in contractual obligations. On top of that, we disbursed P5 billion for the P5,000 cash gift (to government employees)," she said.

Based on the preliminary full-year deficit reported by Amatong, the December gap

2003/B2

China offers $400-M loan for North railway project

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

CHINA, through its Export-Import Bank, has offered to finance nearly all of the financing requirements of phase I of the North Luzon Railways project which will cost more than $400 million and cover 32.2 kilometers of rail tracks from Caloocan to Malolos, Bulacan.

An Inquirer source said the Department of Finance was studying China's Eximbank offer to lend $400 million to the state-owned North Luzon Railways Corp. at comparatively soft terms—payable in 20 years (with a 5-year grace period) at a fixed rate of 3 percent a year. The source said the China Eximbank's project financing terms normally have a 12-year repayment period and 5-percent interest rate.

The source said the government was inclined to tap China Eximbank as the financier and its designated contractor, the state-controlled China National Machinery and Equipment Corp. (CNMEC), because of the long repayment period and low interest rate of the loan, which would cover 95 percent of the project cost.

CNMEC, through a memorandum of understanding with the Bases Conversion Development Authority, had conducted a feasibility study on Northrail in late 2002 wherein it proposed to use the shuttered northern line of the Philippine National Railway as the backbone for Northrail. The PNR line has been closed since 1982 due to serious damage incurred from natural calamities.

If a deal is approved within the next few months, the source said the project could start within the year and phase I likely to start operations by 2006. The second phase, which will cover 60 kilometers to connect the Malolos station to the Clark special economic zone and the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport, will need another seven to 10 years after completion.

The source said the Northrail project has been designed to be compatible with the trains that would use the Southern Luzon railway in line with Malacañang's goal of seamless transport services for Luzon.

With the backing of the Chinese government, the source said the government would finally realize its goal of implementing the Northrail project, which has been on the drawing board since the Ramos administration.

Exports reverse October gain, slump by 4.9% in November to $2.95B

PHILIPPINE export earnings slumped by 4.9 percent in November to $2.95 billion from a year ago, reversing the 6.2-percent gain in October, due to weak demand for electronic products in the United States and Europe.

The National Statistics Office yesterday reported that this brought the country's 11-month export earnings to $32.44 billion, a meager 0.5-percent improvement from the level last year.

This was also still below the government's target of a 5-percent growth in export receipts for the full year.

"With just a month to go, this development indicates that even a 2-percent growth for 2003 is not likely," Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri admitted yesterday.

But Neri noted that at the very least, the country was starting to generate more inflow from non-electronic exports.

The government's top economist said Philippine exports have not recovered strongly as the demand in the United States was also being filled by exports from China and Malaysia, which were giving the country stiff competition in semiconductor assembly and testing.

As such, exports to the United States plunged by 28.9 percent in November, leading to a 19.2-percent decline this year. Cumulative exports to the Netherlands and Germany, the country's top two European partners, also fell 3.9 percent and 13.6 percent, respectively.

"Asian economies took up the slack in demand from the US and Europe. Japan, which is showing signs of recovery, increased its imports from the Philippines by 19.8 percent. Exports to other Asian economies also posted strong growth led by China (66.2 percent), Malaysia (3.2 percent), and Singapore (14.3 percent)," Neri added.

Japan was the country's biggest market for the month, accounting for 20 percent of total earnings valued at $591.66 million, 19.8-percent higher than its imports from the Philippines a year ago.

Earnings from the shipment of electronic products, the country's biggest dollar earner with a 68.2-percent share of receipts, declined by 10.3 percent to $2.01 billion from a year ago due to a 13.4-percent drop in contribution by the semiconductor sector (which produces components and devices) to $1.3 billion.

Earnings from articles of apparel and clothing accessories, which ranked a far second with a share of 4.5 percent, likewise contracted by 24 percent to $132.82 million.

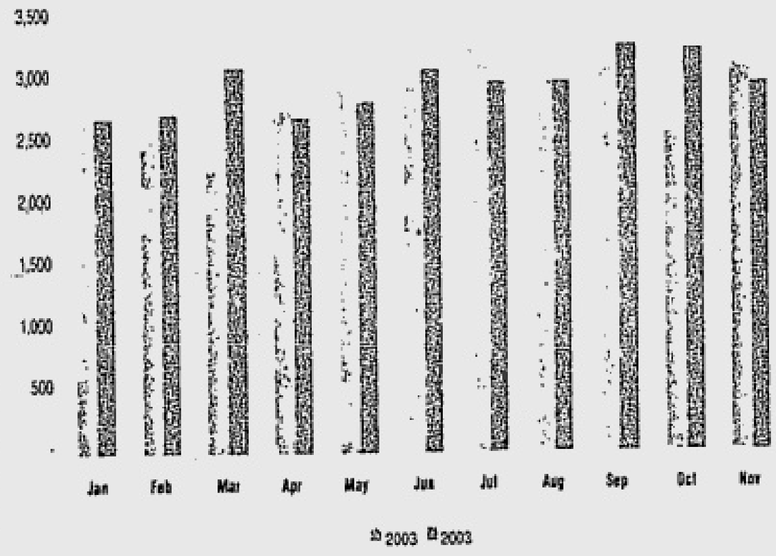
Manufactured goods comprised 89.3 percent of total exports, declining by 6.4 percent from a year ago.

A big saving grace, however, came from agro-based products, whose output accelerated by 16.5 percent to $137.94 million or 4.7 percent of total export revenues.

Coconut oil exports were up by 98.5 percent while mineral product exports expanded by 25.7 percent, supported partly by higher world prices of mineral products and coconut oil.

Doris C. Dumlao

TOTAL EXPORTS
November 2002 to November 2003, in US$ million



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Vehicle sales to grow 10% in '04

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S automotive industry sees bright prospects for 2004 and is targeting a 10-percent sales growth this year.

The industry believes that the expected improvement in the economy spur demand for vehicles.

According to the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. (Campi), the industry is expecting to sell over 100,000 units of vehicles this year, up from 91,000 units in 2003.

Although the industry has yet to release this week the actual 2003 sales figures, the expected 10-percent growth for 2004 is higher than the projected 6-percent growth for 2003.

Campi said the commercial vehicle segment would likely continue dominating the market with a projected 70 percent share, while the passenger car group was seen to grab a 30-percent share.

Campi secretary general Homer Maranan said one of the main factors for the expected sales growth in 2004 was the passage of the excise tax law, which shifted the excise tax system from being engine-based to price-based.

Elizabeth Lee, president of Truck Manufacturers Association and Campi vice president, said market demand for vehicles would now normalize following the implementation of the new excise tax system.

While some sectors think the coming elections will be a drag to business, the automotive industry believes preparations for the elections will be advantageous for car manufacturers.

Lee also said the automotive industry was banking on the stricter implementation of the law regulating the importation of used vehicles this year. She said getting rid of imported second-hand vehicles in the market would significantly boost sales of local car makers.

The industry claimed that imported second-hand vehicles had taken away huge market share from local assemblers.

While the number of vehicles registered in 2002 was about 174,000, industry's sales was only about 86,000 units. This means second-hand vehicles grabbed the majority of the market share.

Lee said the automotive industry expects itself to improve together with the local economy, which the government projects to grow by 4.5 percent to 5.5 percent this year.

A BRIGHTER year awaits the local automotive industry.

According to research organization Institute for Development and Econometric Analysis Inc., the local automotive industry is seen to continue with the growth trend this year and that the country is poised to become a major player in the region.

"The automotive industry seems to have shaken of its subpar performance after the 1997 Asian financial crisis," it said in a paper.

The government has begun programs intended for the development of local automotive industry into becoming one of the biggest exporters in the region.

PNOC-EDC $125-M project gets funding

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PNOC Energy Development Corp.'s $125-million geothermal project in Sorsogon will likely be the first to tap a $2-billion fund for energy efficient projects worldwide.

According to consultancy firm CPI Energy Companies, the optimization project for the Bacun-Manito geothermal field in Sorsogon would have the first crack at the energy fund that was put up by US Bancorp, Comerica Bank, Raiffeisen Banking Group and Frontier Finance Group.

CPI Energy president Antonio Ver said in an interview that $200 million from the fund was earmarked for Philippine projects.

Ver said CPI Energy provided consultancy for the 40-megawatt Bacman project, for which PNOC-EDC had signed a joint venture agreement with Frontier Finance.

The JVA, however, could not be consummated without Malacañang's approval.

Ver said the loan for Bacman was guaranteed by the US Export-Import Bank and that PNOC-EDC, having qualified due to its financial soundness, did not have to put up any collateral.

PNOC-EDC president Sergio Apostol said the construction work alone for the expansion of the Bacman power facility would require $82 million.

Legal issues seen barring Smart's GMA-7 buy bid

By Abigail L. Ho

BECAUSE of legal impediments, Smart Communications Inc. or any other non 100-percent Filipino-owned companies will not be able to acquire a stake in a broadcasting network, unless a constitutional provision is amended.

National Telecommunications Commission chief Armi Jane Borje explained that local firms with even a drop of foreign ownership could not acquire a stake in any media entity because of constitutional restrictions.

Article 16, Section 11 of the Philippine Constitution barred any foreign company from acquiring a stake in a mass media outfit as this had to be 100-percent Filipino-owned.

Reports came out that Smart was acquiring a controlling stake in GMA Network Inc., currently the country's second largest broadcasting company.

However, because Smart was a wholly owned subsidiary of dominant carrier Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Borje said this could not happen.

"Any media entity, if it will have even just one percent or even less than one percent of (foreign ownership), that's not allowed unless they change the law," she said.

"Regardless of whatever company (will buy a stake in a media outfit), we are not talking of just one company here, unless they will change ownership, that can't be done," she added.

She related the case of PLDT's attempt to buy a majority stake in GMA Network in 2001.

PLDT is 24.47-percent owned by First Pacific Co. Ltd., a conglomerate owned and controlled by the Salim family of Indonesia.

The sale, however, never took place. Valuation issues as well as PLDT's debt concerns served as hurdles for the consummation of the deal.

If the sale pushed through, PLDT would have acquired a majority stake in the broadcast firm through Mediaquest Holdings Corp., a media company owned by the PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund.

"But who owns Mediaquest? Effectively, it is still PLDT, so they'll still have a difficult time because it has to be 100-percent Filipino-owned firm. Until they are 100-percent Filipino owned, the sale can't take place," Borje said.

Smart in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday denied reports that it was acquiring a stake in GMA Network.

"We would like to state that Smart is not engaged in any discussions with GMA-7 or with any other television network for that purpose," Smart public affairs head Ramon Isberto said.

Gov't posts debt payment savings of P3B

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE MACAPAGAL administration yesterday said it was able to save about P3 billion from debt servicing last year.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said the government's "opportunistic" borrowing strategy led to lower costs of local and foreign debts.

Last year's savings from debt servicing, however, was lower than P4 billion in 2002 and P6 billion in 2001.

Edeza said the government could keep interest rates at modest levels this year even with the political uncertainties and higher domestic borrowings.

The cost of the government's four-year borrowing went up Monday to 10.5 percent from 10.125 percent in the previous treasury bill auction. The Treasury-led auction committee awarded only P3.83 billion out of the offers amounting to P4.5 billion to prevent an undue increase in interest rates.

EDEZA

"Although we could have accepted higher bids, there was no volume and the rate could have gone up for nothing. I think the market is just trying to test us," said Edeza.

In last Monday's T-bill auction, the 91-day and 182-day treasury bill yields dropped.

In the first 10 months, savings peaked to about P10 billion but dropped by half a month later.

In the last two weeks of November, about P62 billion worth of government securities fell due while about P30 billion in treasury bills and bonds matured in December.

Even as yields on treasury bills and bonds widened since the July 27 Oakwood mutiny, the increases were manageable, he said.

In fact, the benchmark 91-day treasury bill rate ended the year at 6.532 percent against the government forecast of 8-9 percent.

For this year, the government is projecting interest payments of P271.5 billion, which will be about 17.7 percent more than the P230.7 billion in 2003. The principal payments for the year were placed at P270.7 billion, higher by 38.8 percent than the P195 billion last year.

Debt service, as a ratio of the GDP, is projected to increase to 11.6 percent in 2004.

Edeza said despite the political uncertainties that could have pushed domestic interest rates up in the previous months, the cost of government domestic borrowings had remained reasonable.

The treasurer credited the government's ability to keep the budget deficit in check for the continued increase in savings.

Last year, the budget deficit was kept below the P202-billion ceiling.

A deficit on track tends to reduce investment risks and bring down domestic rates, he explained.

Savings from interest payments are often used to offset increases in spending. In November, however, the government tightened the disbursement of funds and spent about P7 billion less than the ceiling. By December, disbursement again exceeded the ceiling.

The central bank said the benchmark 91-day rate could increase to an average of about 7.5 to 8.5 percent in 2004 from about 6 percent this year as a result of the government's decision to tap the local market for 70 percent of its funding requirement with the balance financed through foreign borrowings.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 6, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	33,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	18.5	18.75	18.5	18.5	387,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	48	49	48	49	1,285,800
Citystate Savings Bank	16	16	16	16	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	39	39.5	39	39.5	235,200
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.53	0.55	0.53	0.54	1,170,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	28.5	29	28.5	29	1,819,600
Philippine National Bank	24.5	25.5	24.25	25.5	9,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13	13.5	13	13.5	11,100
Security Bank Corp.	18	18.5	18	18.25	39,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	27	27.5	27	27.5	36,800
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1780	1795	1780	1795	1,100
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	132,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1400	1405	1395	1405	4,170
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTHIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	26	27	26	27	21,600
Diversified Fin. Network	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	9,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.7	0.73	0.7	0.72	4,970,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	935	1005	935	1005	167,420
Ipeople Inc.	0.97	0.98	0.97	0.98	240,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	400,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	700,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.9	0.92	0.9	0.91	12,980,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	30,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1020	1035	1015	1030	658,730
Ivantage Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	10,000
Philweb Corp.	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	113,300,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	15.5	16.5	15.5	16.5	2,299,700
Manila Electric Co. B	25.5	27	25.5	26.5	3,183,300
Petron Corp.	2.32	2.42	2.32	2.36	5,959,000
Trans-Asia Oil And Energy	0.99	1.06	0.99	1	21,050,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	200,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.3	3.35	3.3	3.35	895,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	10,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.36	870,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	150,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	25,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.20	3.2	3.2	3.2	42,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31	31.5	31	31.5	55,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	18.75	20.5	18.75	20.25	524,900
RFM Corp.	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	30,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	60,000
San Miguel Corp. A	54.5	54.5	54	54.5	53,200
San Miguel Corp. B	64.5	64.5	64.5	64.5	60,000
Universal Robina Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	20,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	150,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5.5	5.6	5.4	5.6	19,613,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	194,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	2,000,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	7,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	30,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	200,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.5	0.55	0.5	0.55	28,420,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	50,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	150,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.046	0.046	0.046	0.046	1,500,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	19.25	20.5	19.25	20.5	1,381,900
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	100,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	200,000
Ionics Inc.	1.48	1.6	1.48	1.6	117,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.08	2.08	2.08	2.08	145,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	250,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.1	1.12	1.1	1.12	5,657,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.29	0.31	0.29	0.31	10,510,000
Music Corp.	0.33	0.36	0.33	0.36	300,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	100,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.115	0.12	0.1	0.12	470,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.96	0.97	0.96	0.97	60,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	6,000
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	50,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.85	1	0.85	0.89	260,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.7	0.88	0.7	0.82	180,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.2	1.2	117,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	600,000
Pryce Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	600,000
SPi Technologies Inc.	13	13	12.5	12.5	64,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.55	0.56	0.55	0.55	2,520,000
Mondragon Intl Phils Inc.	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	10,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	130,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	26	27	26	26.5	1,750,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series I	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.1	6.2	6.1	6.2	14,450,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.16	0.165	0.16	0.165	570,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	100,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.22	3,950,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.06	1.08	1.06	1.08	9,614,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	300,000
Primex Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	60,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7	7	6.8	6.8	9,568,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	49,000,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	6,000,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.31	1,410,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.008	0.0085	0.008	0.008	102,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	5,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	3,800,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	3,230,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.47	0.48	0.47	0.47	1,400,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	4,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	172,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	24,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	50,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	100,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	4,600,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	5,176,270	141,659,480.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	253,860,550	1,252,884,530.00
PRO	38,612,000	166,121,490.00
Mining	171,840,000	5,077,100.00
OIL	204,750,000	746,600.00
GRAND TOTALS :	674,238,820	1,566,489,200.00
	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	469.27	UP 13.39
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,323.42	UP 75.82
PRO	591.41	UP 6.84
Mining	1,732.85	UP 41.56
OIL	1.23	UP 0.02
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	906.07	UP 15.75
Composite	1,532.74	UP 45.40

NO. OF ADVANCES: 55; NO. OF DECLINES: 13; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 36; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 104; NO. OF TRADES: 3,765

DISCLOSURES

ABOITIZ Equity Ventures Inc. sold its 35-percent stake in Mindanao Container Corp. for P26.95 million.

* * *

PETER Pereira was appointed executive vice president and chief information officer of **Sun Life Financial Inc.**

* * *

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange Inc. disclosed that it has yet to decide on Securities and Exchange Commission's proposal to spin off its compliance and surveillance group. Also, no decision has been made on the increase of broker contributions.

* * *

A. SORIANO Corp. confirmed reports that it was asking the Supreme Court to reverse a Court of Appeals' ruling that found it liable for P6.7 million in income tax deficiency for the year 1985. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

Tougher rice importation rules OKd

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE NATIONAL Food Authority will again allow farmers groups to participate in its rice importation program, but under stricter guidelines.

NFA Deputy Administrator Gregorio Tan said that only viable farmers cooperatives engaged in rice farming would be allowed to import under the program.

This is to prevent a repeat of the last year's incident when rice import shipments were delayed due mainly to financial difficulties encountered by some farmers cooperatives that were accredited to import.

Out of the supposedly 400,000 metric tons that the farmers groups were supposed to bring in, only 229,000 metric tons made it to local shores. The rest were brought in by traders.

The NFA was forced to extend the import program twice from the Sept. 30 deadline due to the failure of some of the farmers groups to bring in the volume as scheduled under the program."

With the stricter rules in place, the NFA is confident that the rice importation program will proceed smoothly this year.

"The Farmers as Importers Program will continue because we have seen how the involvement of the private sector had helped the agency in focusing on its other functions such as domestic procurement," said Tan.

In a related development, bank loans to the NFA can be considered a form of compliance with the Agri-Agra Law, according to a recent circular issued by the Monetary Board.

The Agri-Agra Law requires banks to set aside a quarter of their loanable funds for agriculture and agrarian reform projects.

The NFA borrows at least P5 billion a year for rice importation, palay procurement and administrative funding requirements.

2003 budget deficit. . .

From page B1

stood at P36.5 billion. Given that revenues hit the P51-billion goal last month, the P24-billion increase in the deficit against the target came only from the spending side.

"We paid accounts payable which we deferred in the past when we were managing our revenues. We would continue to exercise austerity measures this year to meet our (deficit) target of P197.8 billion," the finance chief said.

Strong revenues in 2003 were the key to taming the budget gap.

The Bureau of Customs collected P106.056 billion in taxes and tariffs in 2003, allowing it to surpass the P100.06-billion goal by 6 percent and the year-ago level by P9.8 billion or 10.2 percent.

Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo said the bureau raised P9.57 billion in December against a target of P8.13 billion.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue said last week that it would likely meet and even slightly exceed the full-year goal of P424 billion. It counted as part of last year's collection the P4-billion payment made by the central bank for unpaid taxes in 2001, 2002 and first three quarters of 2003.

The BIR collects 72 percent of the government's total revenues while Customs delivers about 17 percent. Bernardo said Customs posted a new collection record in 2003, eclipsing the P98.95 billion made in 1996.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said that revenues exceeded the full-year program of P584 billion by about P36 billion. He could not say by how much the P786-billion expenditure ceiling was exceeded but added that the "higher spending should not make a dent."

Tessie to Sy Tony to make buy a Go

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

PEOPLE normally line up to see taipan Henry Sy and his daughter/heir-apparent Tessie to win business deals.

These days, Tessie is finding herself on the other side of the equation, doing the courting.

According to the grapevine, the female chair of the Sy-controlled Banco de Oro has been personally calling on the Go family, even visiting them last Sunday despite a bout of flu in an effort to allay their fears about the planned Sy entry in Equitable PCI Bank.

The negotiations have not been easy, despite the personal friendship with EPCIB chair Antonio Go (the latter is also chair of the joint venture with the Sys, SM-Equicom Computer Services), but at least the two sides are still talking, according to the pro-Sy grapevine.

The EPCIB board is scheduled to formally discuss the "investment" of Banco de Oro in their bank on Tuesday, but already the International Finance Corp., which lent $20 million to the bank to tide it over in the wake of the BW-Jose Velarde difficulties, has publicly voted for the infusion and, yes, even mentioned the feared word "M."

In addition to seller Social Security System, EPCIB vice chair Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, according to the grapevine, will likely vote for the Sy entry. The Government Service Insurance System, which, together with SSS, holds a 35 percent stake in EPCIB, has indicated it would go along with the proposal, as well.

Incidentally, it was Romualdez, a corporate lawyer himself, who had asked for the deferment of the Go proposal to insert a "poison pill" provision in the EPCIB charter during the April stockholders' meeting.

That provision would have required a potential acquirer to offer the same premium and price to all shareholders, thus exponentially raising the price of what normally would be limited to pay for a controlling bloc.

Even before the Friday disclosure, BDO had hired as investment adviser, the Swiss financial giant UBS (local office headed by Lauro Baja III), incidentally the underwriter and lone book runner for the recent $200-million subordinated bond issue of EPCIB.

Over and above the due diligence conducted by UBS on behalf of the bondholders, BDO will also need another auditing firm to conduct a deeper, wider examination of the books of EPCIB to comb through the layers of "unaccounted liabilities" or "un-reconciled accounts" that may lie submerged in the accounting maze.

EPCIB's external auditor is industry leader SGV, while BDO's is CL Manabat. According to the grapevine, newly installed SGV chair David Balangue is trying to see Tessie Sy-Coson in an effort to win the stellar assignment. Balangue guarantees there will not be any repeat of the Piltel and Victorias Milling accounting bombs.

Heard through the grapevine

- EPCIB has activated, in anticipation of a crisis PR situation, a public relations agency whose bread and butter is Usaid's Agile account.
- THE YUCHENGCOS are setting up their own advertising agency to initially handle the in-house but substantial RCBC/Malayan/Grepalife accounts.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

NTC, mobile phone firms seek compromise on SIM registration

By Abigail L. Ho

IN A CONCERTED effort to curb the incidence of kidnapping in the country, the National Telecommunications Commission and mobile phone operators are trying to reach a compromise to solve the problem of registering prepaid subscriber identification module (SIM) cards.

The NTC had earlier issued a memorandum circular ordering all cellular service providers to require buyers of prepaid SIM packs to fill out forms that would help identify them, if and when necessary.

The order was recalled, however, and replaced with another circular that compelled all telecommunications companies to immediately provide the government with information deemed necessary to solving kidnapping incidents.

NTC chair Armi Jane Borje said the phone firms had bucked the idea of having all prepaid SIM cards registered because of the additional cost it would entail.

The phone firms said these costs would most likely be passed on to consumers in the form of higher rates.

"The NTC is asking them what these costs are. Maybe we can do something else, find another way to go about this (prepaid SIM card registration) without incurring too much additional cost. The NTC is now looking at this," she told reporters yesterday.

The cellular service providers, she said, were very supportive of the government's efforts to crack down on kidnap-for-ransom groups that usually use prepaid SIM cards to get in touch with their victims' relatives.

All telecommunications firms, she said, immediately provided the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (Naktaf) with information needed to solve a kidnapping incident.

In terms of actual registration of prepaid SIM packs, however, she said the phone companies, the NTC, as well as other stakeholders have yet to find a "middle ground."

"The NTC is trying to balance the interest of consumers and the operators. It's both a matter of national security and low-cost access," she said.

N. Mindanao agri production up in Q3 '03

OZAMIZ CITY—Production of staple food in Northern Mindanao increased slightly in the third quarter of 2003, according to the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

Rice production during the period stood at 87,143 metric tons, up by around 8 percent compared to the same period in the previous year.

This was valued at P735 million, an increase from the previous year's P687 million despite a slight decrease in the average buying price of *palay*.

This performance was underpinned by the increase in hectarage devoted to rice cultivation, expansion of irrigation services, increased usage of high-quality rice varieties and favorable weather conditions at the onset of the second semester of 2003.

The total area planted to rice throughout the region's five provinces climbed by 11 percent during the period, from 23,888 hectares to 26,415 hectares.

Bukidnon provided the bulk of the region's rice production at 50,913 metric tons, up by 15 percent from 44,353MT the previous period.

However, dramatic production leaps were achieved in both Camiguin and Misamis Occidental at over 50 percent. Only Lanao del Norte experienced a downturn in production with rice harvest decreasing by 12 percent.

The rice farms of both Misamis Occidental and Camiguin provinces also registered marked improvements in production per unit of land cultivated, while modest gains were achieved in Misamis Oriental. *Ryan D. Rosauro, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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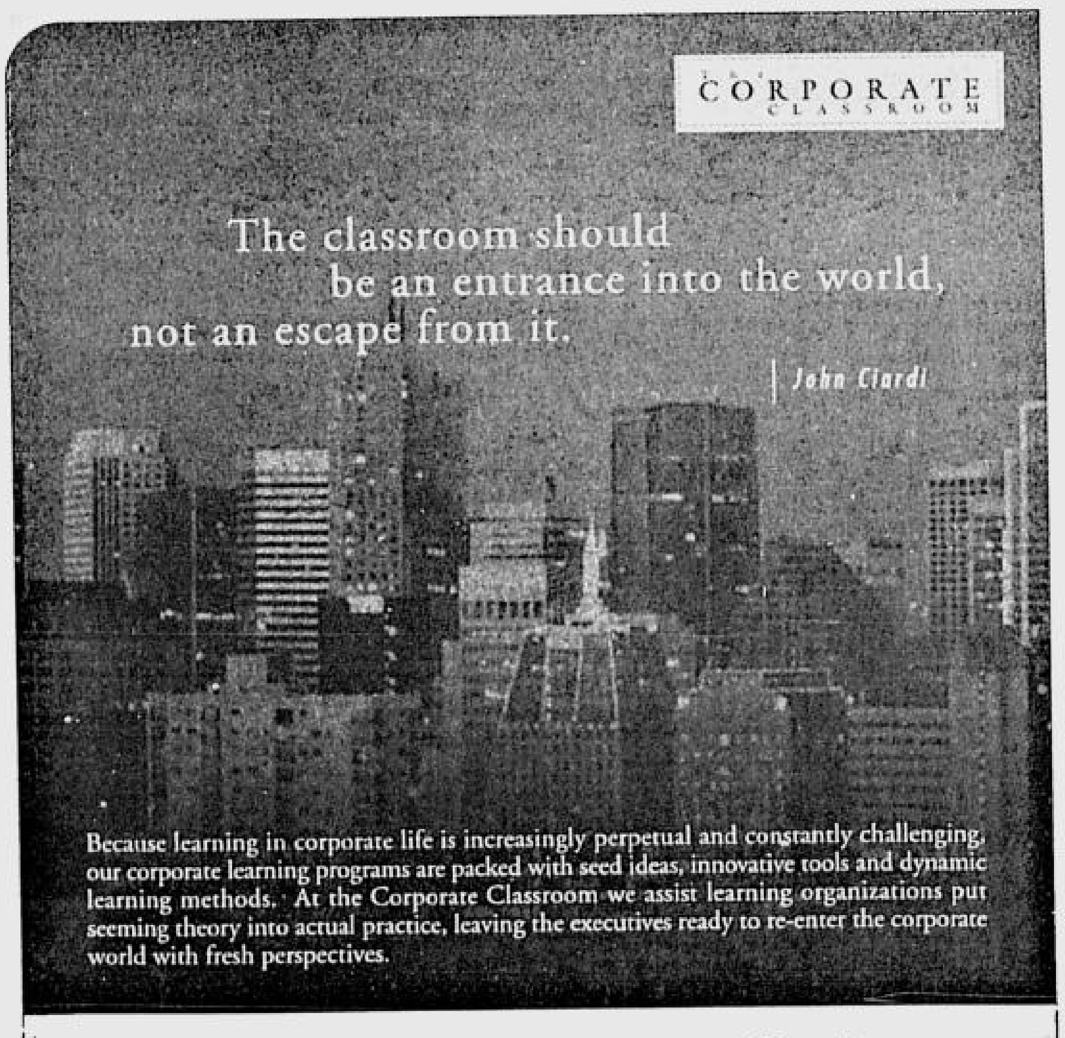

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DATE January	PROGRAM	DATE February	PROGRAM
13 -14	Work Ethics Learning Experience (WELE)	03-04	Creating a Balanced Scorecard
14 -16	Basic Selling Course	04-06	Team Development: Sharing A Destiny
20-21	Business Excellence through Service Transformation (BEST)	10-11	English Speech Lessons (Level 1-3)
21-23	Supervisory Development Program	11-13	Shaping the Organizational Culture
27-28	People Philosophy Management (PPM)	17-18	Building A Learning Organization
28 -30	Fundamentals of Effective Marketing	18-20	Project Management
		24-25	Work Ethics Learning Experience
		25-27	Developing Your Management Skills

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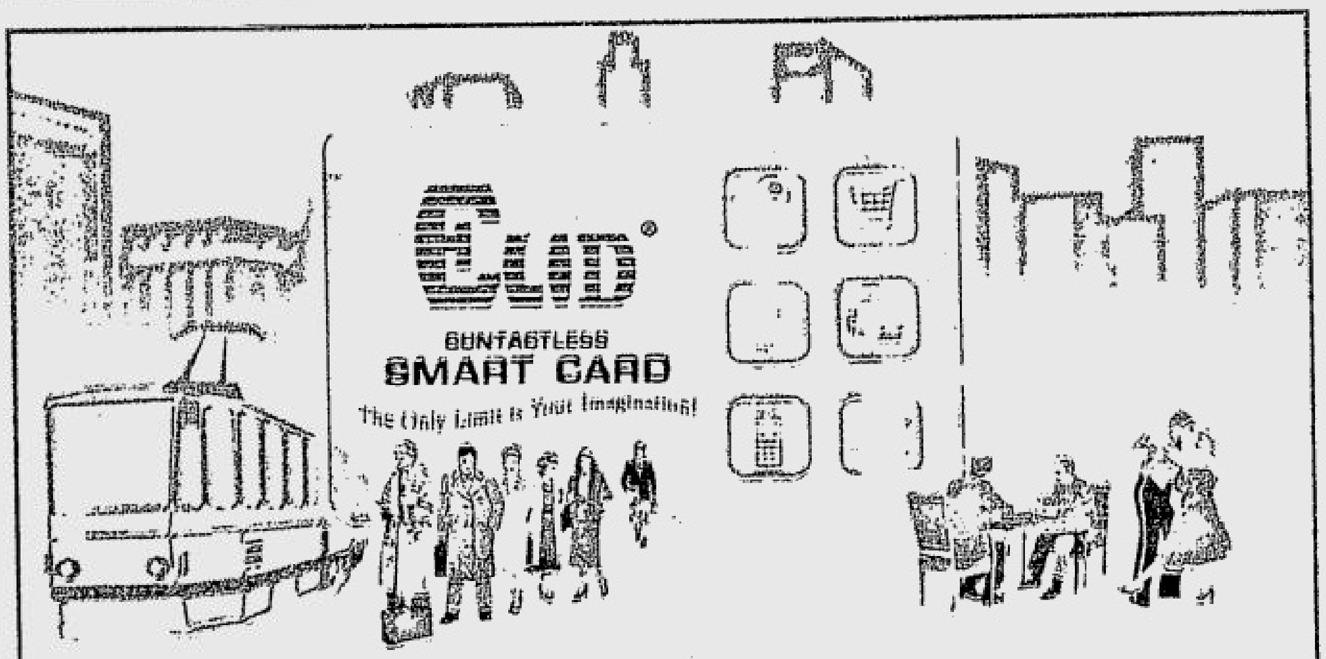
Phone: 721-6618, 722-4525, 722-4516 • Fax 744-0972 • E-mail ceoinc@dtfconnet.com
DTF Consulting Network



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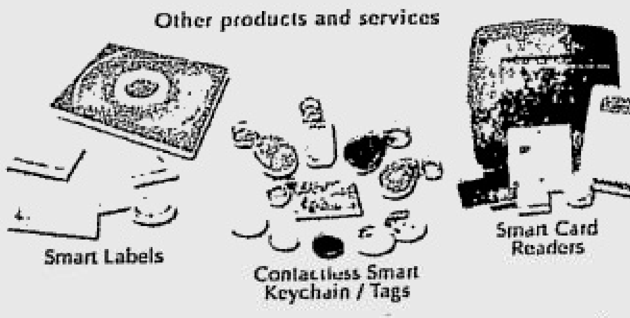

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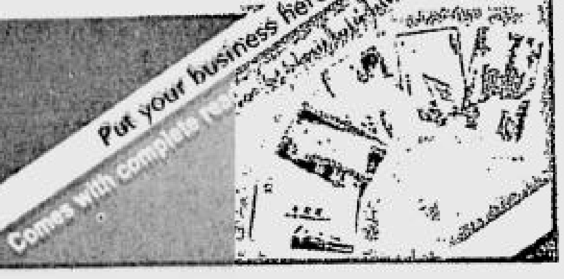

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LOW RATE MAID 928-7096

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Prov'l Trusted Maids Yaya CALL:9124701 • 9124706

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L-BAHAY 9206784 4540520

A-1 Lipat Bahay 4313975

LBAHAY 7113540

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PASIG

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P5,000.00 to Reserve / No Loan Req
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CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

Kensington Parkplace In Fort Bonifaci Call 634-9500

MANILA

930T nr UST 0920-8309744

NR LA SALLE TAFT BnewTwnhse/3stry/3br/3tb/grge P3 295M 8903461 loc 34

MANDALUYONG

Lee Garden/Malayan
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PASIG

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Malayan Plaza ADB Ave. Nr Podium Call 634-9500

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CONDO/TWNHSE

PASIG

ULTIMATE 4 EX-PATS NR ADB Ortigas Decorated 2br 2tb + mds Jacuzi bar dishwasher Italian furn fixt air/c maid serv P35T T374-2165 / 67 • 0917-8966844

APARTMENT

MANILA

1557 A. Isip Paco w/ garage 2BR 1TB 5610197 5636296

U/D w/Veranda Strng H2O Garage 2417 Taal St. nr S/S H-way P10,500 •8524207 8530583•

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

APARTMENT

PARANAQUE

8201453 PQUE LOPEZ SUCAT

QUEZON CITY

Cubao3.8M Std Lady9124428

ROOM & BOARD

Rm. 2 Ldys Proj.7 4154327

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MALATE OFFICES 526-8048

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LOAN & MORTGAGE

2% W/O TAKING CAR 3677523/24

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CARS

TOYOTA

'91L-Ace fresh 165T 4752630

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CARS FOR RENT

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1.5% CARLOAN 373-6519

1.5% CARLOAN 788-0357

1.5% CARLOAN 952-2510

1.5% Easy Carloan 7815352/55

1.5% Fast Car Loan 6560140

1.5% w/o Taking Car 6567685

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3732081-82

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3650974/75

•1HR Fast Car Loan 7125202•

2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/oTaking Car 3731021

A RESPECTABLE CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Minimum P 500T / Annual Income as Marketing Consultant

G&W Architects, Engineers, Project Development Consultant

For young aspiring marketing professionals on a New concept that lets people own Condominium units at **Direct Cost** through the **"Build to Own"** BTO Method that saves 40%. ***"The Future Way of Owning Homes, Doing It Today"***

Project at Fort Bonifacio Global City
- Studio Units at **P 1.3 M**
- 2-Bedroom Units at **P 3.06 M**
- 3-Bedroom Units at **P 5.1 M**

Previous working experience is not necessary.

Call **6355375 to 77** and look for Ms. Lilet Lingad or Ms. Marilyn Adriatico for free training

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CAR LOAN

2% w/oTaking Car 8959454

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

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DOG TRAINER 4528681

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Repair / Polish Any watch
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7220433 • 4123543

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALE

MANAGER-LOCAL TOURS OPERATIONS INTERPRETER TOURIST GUIDE Must be fluent in English, Tagalog and Korean Lang. Male, 25-30yrs old, college graduate, willing to undergo training call 047-2526304/09209210451 Yong Travel & Tours. SBMA,Subic,Zambales.

FEMALE

EXPERIENCE FAMILY COOK TEL. 843-6715

LADY COLLECTOR for Calabarzon Area. 21-25y/o College Grad. Prof in English Tel. 687-3544 • 687-3957

OFFICE SECRETARY 4313975

SECRETARY, College Grad 21-26y/o Single Computer Lit. Microsoft Ofc 687-3544/3957

Notice is hereby given that the property of 2,292 Has. agri/residential lots at Tanawan, Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija is being offered for sale by:
1. Cambitala Primary Multi-Purpose Kilusang Bayan, Inc. CLOA-0-1290 to 1291;
2. East Poblacion Primary Multi-Purpose Kilusang Bayan, Inc., CLOA-0-1297 to 1298;
3. Buklod ng Pagmumuling-Gubat sa Mataas na Bundok, Inc., CLOA-0-1299 to 1301;
4. Samahang Magsasaka ng Pantabangan Foundation sa Nueva Ecija CLOA-0-1294

MARIDOL CUMPIO
719-1844/0919-5860305

NOTICE

The public is hereby informed that Ms. Jaymalyn "Gemma" Sison Cruz, whose photograph appears above, is no longer connected with Philam Savings Bank, Inc. ("Philambank") effective November 3, 2003. Any transaction entered into by Ms. Cruz after November 3, 2003, will not be honored by Philambank.

(PDI--Jan. 7, 2004)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALE/FEMALE

DERMATOLOGIST • 637-7396

Family Driver Midwife Boy Resort Stay-In Single •8524207 8530583•

Food & Beverages Mgr. Cashier, Bookkeeper Apply @ VS Sarabia Optical Megamall Branch • 633-1645

FREE CAREGIVER TRAINING 4043528 5212773 5899958

★TALENT MANAGER★ w/ experience in nite club bookings 8175511/8944950

JOB HIRING 09167054572 AINA

Ofc Asst. 0920-3562010 Amor

PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late BASILIO CABRERA has been extrajudicially settled by his heirs per Doc. No. 110; Page No. 22; Book No. XXXI; Series of 2003, before Notary Public Atty. Angel R. Gonzales PTR No. 7156704, Pasay City PDI-January 7, 14 & 21, 2004

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is given of the loss of S2 Card of Raquel C. Yangco w/ Lic.#19974N01 (PDI-1/7/04)

Notice is given of the loss of S2 Card of Romella P. Santiago, MD with License No 13377R01272(PDI-1/7/04)

Notice is hereby given that the DANGEROUS DRUG S-2 ID License# 11240R020951 of Dra. Ma. Cynthia B. Sanchez was lost. (PDI- Dec. 31, 2003; Jan. 07 & 14, 2004)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

HOME BASED Business 8376068

Security Agency • 631-3496

SINGAPOREAN looking for partners to develop new industry with patented technology 0927-4936266

Work By Phone, Earn Up 2 P30T/month! Female, 28&up! 892-7828

CARS FOR SALE

1. Nissan Altima
Dark Green
95 Model, Twin Cam, 16 Valve
P200T only
2. Nissan Vanette
White
95 Model, All Power
180T only

For inquiries, call or text Fresier Sison 0917-5181003

VSO

Voluntary Service Overseas sends professional, experienced and qualified international volunteers at the request of non-government (NGO), governmental and community organisations in the Philippines. 40 professional volunteers are currently working all over the Philippines in community-based natural resource management (e.g. marine biologists, agro-foresters), gender & development (e.g. counselors and researchers), including informal education particularly with Deaf communities and enterprise development.

VSO Philippines (VSOP) welcomes applications for a high quality, committed staff to work with foreign volunteers professionals, to share skills and change lives.

Programme Officer

for TOSCADAR-Mindanao (Technical and Organisational Skills for Civil Society Action for the Displaced and at Risk in Mindanao) TOSCADAR-Mindanao is an EU-funded VSO programme covering the areas of Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Bukidnon, Misamis Occidental and Zamboanga del Sur that aims to assist displaced and marginalised "at risk" or vulnerable communities in their rehabilitation and development initiatives.

Based in Iligan City, the successful candidate will develop and manage VSOP's Peace building programme. Main tasks include volunteer placement and support, management of VSOP personnel in Iligan Office, and development of the VSOP programme with other VSOP management team members. Would include fund management and administration, capacity-building for local rehabilitation partners, overall assistance to TOSCADAR programme management, support to VSO volunteers in Mindanao, and support toward overall maintenance and administration of the wider VSOP programme.

Essential skills, experience and qualities for this post are:

Proven commitment to marginalised people and communities, preferably the Muslims and indigenous peoples in Mindanao.

Knowledge and experience of development work: at least 5 years professional experience in development and/or volunteer sector; sound analysis of development issues, specially Muslim and Indigenous Peoples' issues, an understanding of causes of poverty and conflict including emergency and rehabilitation.

Project management experience including planning, finance and fundraising.

Strong interpersonal skills in a cross-cultural context:

Strong communication in English; (oral and written) to be able to communicate effectively to VSOP, VSO UK, donors and various audiences; knowledge of Microsoft office applications, preferably with knowledge on other databases, spreadsheets, and web.

Preferably with 3 years management experience including personnel management and staff supervision.

Finance, administrative, organisation and facilitating skills: Experience of tracking, monitoring budgets and expenditures; prepare narrative and financial reports. Able to organise, and facilitate VSO workshop, training and conferences; simultaneously implementing many tasks under pressure; experience of handling a heavy and routine office workload, good organisation and time management. Must be a good team player.

Ability to travel: S/he will monitor the effectiveness of existing placements, as well as identify, assess, evaluate, and recommend suitable new volunteer placements. S/he will therefore be expected to be on tour every month. Must have full driving license.

This post is initially offered on a one-year contract.

Closing date : 15 January 2004
Interview date : To be announced later to shortlisted candidates
Starting date : 1 May 2004

Please send letter of application and curriculum vitaé marked confidential to: PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, VSO Philippines, No. 20 South Lawin Avenue corner Bacolod Road, PHILAM Homes, West Avenue, Quezon City, 1104; or email address: **dolly.domingo@vsoint.org**

We regret to say that VSO can only respond to short listed candidates who will be sent an application form in the week beginning January 19, 2004.

PORO POINT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
A Subsidiary of Bases Conversion Development Authority

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY

The Poro Point Management Corporation (PPMC) invites prospective bidders to apply for pre-qualification for the bidding of the **San Fernando Airport Runway Lights Development Project** under the Build-Transfer (BT) Scheme pursuant to R.A. 6957, as amended by R.A. 7718, otherwise known as the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) Law, and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

Interested Proponents are required to submit a Letter of Intent addressed to the Chairman, PPMC-Prequalification, Bids and Awards Committee (PBAC), Poro Point Management Corporation, Terminal Building, San Fernando Airport, Canaoay, San Fernando City, La Union.

Pre-qualification documents can be secured from the above address starting **January 12 through 14, 2004, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of ONE THOUSAND PESOS (P1,000.00) and after submission of above LOI.

The deadline of submission of the complete pre-qualification documents is exactly **3:00 p.m., February 10, 2004.** Prospective bidders shall present the original copies of documents or evidence for authentication purposes. Failure to comply with this requirement will be ground for disqualification.

The preparation, submission and evaluation of pre-qualification documents is governed by the provisions of the above BOT Law and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

PPMC reserves the right to reject any or all application for pre-qualification, waive any defect or infirmity therein, to accept the bid and to award the contract which is most advantageous to the Corporation.

For inquiries regarding the project, contact **Engr. Virgilio M. Salayog,** Head, Ports Management Division at Tel. No.: (072) 242-56-38.

(Sgd.) VICTOR G. FLORESCA
Chairman, PBAC

(PDI–Dec. 24, 31, 2003 & Jan. 7, 2004)

OFFICE FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT FOR SALE!

We wish to invite interested parties to bid for Office Tables, Chairs, Cabinets, Computers, and other office equipment.

LOCATION: Building A, Bonifacio Center, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, Metro Manila

For inquiries and further details, please call Ms. Claire Raymundo at 555-0007

HOME GUARANTY CORPORATION
GUARANTY AND CREDIT INSURANCE GROUP

INVITATION TO BID

The HOME GUARANTY CORPORATION (HGC) hereby invites offers to purchase by way of cash sealed bids on the following property/ies located at the Manila Harbour Centre, Radial Rd. 10, Vitas, Tondo, Manila.

A. INDUSTRIAL LOTS

ITEM NO.	BLOCK NO.	LOT AREA	LOT AREA (sqm.)	MINIMUM BID PRICE
1	2	6	5,000.00	105,000,000.00
2	2	7	5,000.00	105,000,000.00
3	4	10	10,000.00	205,000,000.00

B. COMMERCIAL LOTS

4	6	30	257.89	5,544,635.00
5	16	2	2,458.40	55,314,000.00
6	16	3	2,455.40	55,246,500.00
7	17	4	3,319.70	73,033,400.00
8	18	8	419.48	9,018,820.00
9	18	9	419.48	9,018,820.00
10	18	10	419.48	9,018,820.00
11	19	10	373.37	8,027,455.00
12	19	13	373.37	8,027,455.00
13	19	14	373.37	8,027,455.00

A bidder's bond equivalent to ten (10%) percent of the total bid price in the form of cash or certified manager's/cashier's check-payable to HGC will be required of all prospective bidders.

The bidder is advised to inspect the property/ies subject of public bidding to see for himself its/their actual condition. All properties are being sold on "as is" basis. Particulars may be obtained from the Cashflow Guaranty Dept. / Developmental Guaranty Dept. at the 4th Flr., Jade Bldg., 335 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City or call 897-3310 or 897-3488.

Sealed bids must be received on or before 2:00 p.m. on January 15, 2004 at the HGC Head Office Ground Flr., Jade Bldg., 335 Sen. Gil Puyat AVe., Makati City.

THE CORPORATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL OFFER, TO WAIVE ANY DEFECTS THEREIN OR TO ACCEPT SUCH OFFERS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE CORPORATION.

(Sgd.) RAFAEL P. DELOS SANTOS
Chairman
Bids and Award Committee

(PDI – January 6, 7 & 8, 2004)

National Power Corporation

ADDENDUM NO. 1
AD. NO. NPC-PSD-2004-01

TO: ALL PROSPECTIVE BIDDERS

Please be informed that the scheduled Public Bidding and Pre-Bid Conference for the above subject advertisement will be reset as follows:

Schedule	From	To
PUBLIC BIDDING		
1A1-1A2/1B1-1B3	January 21, 2004 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM	January 28, 2004 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM
1C1-1C2/1D1-1D3	January 22, 2004 10:00 AM / 2:00 PM	January 29, 2004 10:00 AM / 2:00 PM
1E1-1E3/1F1-1F3	January 23, 2004 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM	January 30, 2004 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM
1G1-1G3/1H1-1H3	January 26, 2004 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM	February 2, 2004 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM
1I1-1I3	January 27, 2004 9:00 AM	February 3, 2004 9:00 AM
1J1-1J3/1K1-1K2	January 28, 2004 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM	February 4, 2004 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM
1L1-1L3/1M1-1M3	January 29, 2004 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM	February 5, 2004 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM
1N1-1N3/1O1-1O3	January 30, 2004 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM	February 6, 2004 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM
1P1-1P2/1Q1-1Q2	February 2, 2004 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM	February 9, 2004 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM
PRE-BIDDING CONFERENCE		
1A1, 1A2, & 1B2/1C1-1C2	January 7, 2004 10:00 AM / 2:00 PM	January 14, 2004 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM
1D3, 1E2, 1G1 & 1H1/1I1-1I2	January 8, 2004 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM	January 15, 2004 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM
1J2 & 1K1/1L1-1L3 & 1M2	January 9, 2004 10:00 AM / 2:00 PM	January 16, 2004 10:00 AM / 2:00 PM
1N2, 1N3, 1O2 & 1P2/1Q1-1Q2	January 12, 2004 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM	January 19, 2004 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM

Note : Issuance of Bid Documents starts on January 5, 2004. Last day of Issuance shall be seven (7) calendar days before the bidding date for each schedule.

Please be guided accordingly.

CHAIRMAN
Bids and Awards Committee
PSD-NPC

(PDI – January 7, 2004)

CALLING ALL M.S.C. ALUMNI
Of The
SACRED HEART SEMINARY
at

Angeles City, Pampanga; Lawaan-Talisay, Cebu;
17th Street, Quezon City, M.M.; Villadolid-Carcar, Cebu;
Regala-Banawa, Cebu

For our Grand Reunion
January 9-11, 2004

And In The Celebration of the
150th M S C Jubilee Year

Venue: Chevalier School/S.H.S.,
Angeles City, Pampanga

Please contact:

	Mobile	e-mail
Alex Pe	0917-8102567	alejandropeus@yahoo.com
Rufo Dacanay	0917-8101030	rcdacanay@attglobal.net
Patrick Ignacio	0916-3758219	ipml@pworld.net.ph
Mario Tiongco	0917-8922795	mat@prudentialife.com
Fr. Pete Arguillas, MSC	0917-5103900	pcargmsc@yahoo.com

Or call : Chevalier School (045) 322-1750
Fr. Henry Groenewegen, MSC
Fr. Pete Arguillas, MSC

May The Sacred Heart Of Jesus
Be Loved Everywhere

CONTRACT SIGNING

Solar Entertainment recently signed up as one of the major sponsors of Philippine International Cable Convention, a project of the Philippine Cable Television Association Inc. (PCTA). The contract was inked by (seated from right) Tony Selda, Convention over-all chair and director, PCTA and Peter Chanliong, executive vice president, Solar Entertainment Corporation. Looking on are (standing from left) Allan Dungao, director PCTA; J. Manuel Dabao, president, PCTA; and Enrico Arce, marketing manager, Solar Entertainment Corporation.

GMA commends NFA on relief operation

NATIONAL Food Authority Administrator Arthur C. Yap expressed his appreciation to the staff and personnel of NFA's field offices in Leyte and the CARAGA region for their quick response and immediate assistance to the people affected by landslide and flashfloods triggered by the recent typhoon that hit the areas.

Yap said the employees have kept NFA's food security mandate to keep the supply and price of rice stable within 48 hours after the disaster struck. Also part of the agency's mandate is to have a 15-day rice inventory in its warehouses at any time.

As of December 29, the NFA had already issued 786 bags of rice for relief operations in Leyte, out of a total of 1,580 bags authorized for the purpose.

Yap noted that relief operations for the affected families in Southern Leyte continues. Used clothes donated by NFA employees were recently turned over to Governor Rosette Lerias.

Yap said rice supply in Region VIII or Eastern Visayas remain stable. The NFA in the region presently has 344,232 bags enough to meet for 14 days the daily requirement of 21,716 bags. The present inventory is also being augmented by rice shipments coming from Occidental Mindoro. He added that unloading of rice for Northern and Eastern Samar is ongoing and each of these provinces shall get an additional 20,000 and 21,476 bags respectively.

In the flashflood hit CARAGA region, meanwhile, Yap informed that the NFA's recent rice monitoring showed that the combined industry inventory is estimated to last for two months. The NFA's total inventory of 219,630 bags in the area can supply the region's daily rice requirement of 14,208 bags for 15 days.

Rice inventory is highest in Surigao del Norte with 22 days stock, Surigao del Sur with 18 days, Agusan del Norte with 17 days and Agusan del Sur with more than a week's supply.If necessary, the region's rice requirement shall be augmented by supply coming from Region VI or the Western Visayas which is experiencing an abundant harvest.

Through the NFA OPCEN, rice withdrawal for relief operations can be facilitated anytime it is requested. Yap said the NFA has a standing memorandum of agreement with the disaster relief agencies allowing the latter to withdraw rice on credit from any NFA warehouse nearest the disaster sites.

Yap said the NFA has already issued a total of 2,755 bags of rice for relief operations in the CARAGA region with the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Center receiving 1,460 bags, the local government units (LGUs) getting 1,090 bags, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) with 140 bags, 35 bags for the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) and 30 bags for the representative of Surigao del Norte.

For suggestions, queries or complaints, Yap encourages the public to text NFA. Just key in the word sug (for suggestion) qry (for inquiries/requests for assistance) or cmp (for complaints/grievances) space, name, address and message and send to 0917-6210927.

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John 3:16

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"Well done thou good and faithful servant...
Enter thou into the joy of the Lord."
Matthew 25:21

MA. DELISE GARILAO LOGICO

Peacefully reunited with her Creator
on January 6, 2004

Her body lies in state at the Magallanes Chapel from January 6 to January 8, 2004 and shall be cremated on January 9, 2004 - 5:00 a.m.

She is survived by her husband **NET**, children **MICHAEL/BON, JO ANN/JAMES, MARK** and **JENNY.**

"I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies, and whoever believes in me will never die." **John 11:25-26**

JACQUELINE REYES OCAMPO

a.k.a. Jackie O

who found our Lord on January 5, 2004 at the age of 41.

Her loving parents, **Adaucto** and **Alicia**; siblings, **Janette, Jonathan** and **Jeanmarie**; nephews and nieces **Miyo, Kevin, Kirby, Elise, Katrina, Gabby, Stephen, Jacob** and **Jon Sebastian**, and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the family residence at No. 3 Rizal Ave., Taytay, Rizal. Interment will be on Thursday afternoon, January 8, 2004.

The Maryknoll Sisters express their
deep gratitude for the life of their

Sister Rosemarie O'Callahan, M.M.

who died at the Maryknoll Sisters Center, Maryknoll, New York
on December 24, 2003

She was a Maryknoll Sister for 76 years and was among those interned in Los Baños during World War II. Sister Rose Marie was a Faculty Member and Registrar of Maryknoll College, Quezon City, and Dean of La Salette College, Santiago, Isabela.

"Only goodness and love will pursue me
all the days of my life. I will dwell in the
house of the Lord for years to come."
– Psalm 23:6

FLORA BALAGOT SISON

October 4, 1925 – January 5, 2004
peacefully joined her Creator at the age of 78
after receiving apostolic pardon and blessings.

Her bereaved husband **(Ret.) Col. Renato Y. Sison;**
Children: **Luisito** and **Elvira Reyes;**
Roberto and **Imelda Sison;**
Renato Jr. and **Lily Pe; Regina;**
Marie Angelique and **Jose Labayen;**
Donna Marie; and **Anna Marie (†);**
Grandchildren: **Paul; Anna** and **Bert;**
Robby and **Michelle; Luigi; Daphne;**
Rainier; Justin; Mark; Vinci;
Denise; Jamie; Louis; and **Katrina**
her 5 great grandchildren, brother, sisters, and relatives

request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains now lie in state at Christ the King Parish Church, Greenmeadows Avenue, Quezon City.

She will be cremated at La Funeraria Paz
Sunday, January 11, 2004 after th 8 A.M. Mass.

EMARDO ARBOLEDA – URETA

Peacefully joined his Creator after his last sacrament on January 5, 2004 at the age of 79.

His wife **VIRGINIA**; children **ANNABELLE, EVELYN, MARITESS, RAMON "Boboy," FRANCISCO "Tan-Tan," & VICKI**; grandchildren, in-laws, relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish – Chapel, Broadway St., New Manila, Quezon City.

Interment will be announced later.

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Speaker Jose de Venecia, Jr. and the Members of the House of Representatives

mourn the demise of

Honorable Maria Clara L. Lobregat

Mayor, Zamboanga City - 1998 - present
Congresswoman, Lone District Zamboanga City - 1987 - 1992, 1992 - 1995, 1995 - 1998
Delegate, Constitutional Convention - 1970

on January 2, 2004 at the age of 82.

Her remains will be brought to the Plenary Hall, House of Representatives, Batasan Hills, Quezon City, from Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City for a Requiem Mass and Necrological Services at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 8, 2004.

After the Requiem Mass and Necrological Services at the House of Representatives, her remains will be brought back to Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City.

Interment will be on Saturday, January 10, 2004 at the Manila Memorial Park, after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

We request readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want
... Surely goodness and loving kindness will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord, forever." **(Psalm 23:1, 6)**

AUGUSTO CHAVES NABLE

Peacefully joined his Creator on the 27th of December, 2003 in the United States at the age of 73.

Tito's bereaved wife **Linda**; children **Dino, Aissa** and **Dennis Montecillo**, and **Marco** and **Mariles**; brothers and sisters **Peping** (†) and **Lolita** (†), **Horacio** and **Veth**, **Nena** and the **Marques** of **Headfort**, **Eddie** and **Marlo**, **Baby** and **Mona**, and **Inday**; in-laws **Rolando** (†) and **Mariese Piit**, and **Julie** and **Joe Belen**; grandchildren **Karla**, **Bianca**, **Enzo**, **Leandro**, **Alan**, **Veanna**, **Andrea**, **Victoria**, **Monica**, **Niccolo** and **Gabriel**; cousins, nephews and nieces, relatives and friends request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains will lie in state at the Capilla de la Virgen, Sanctuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati, on Wednesday, January 7, 2004. Holy Eucharist will be celebrated at 4 P.M.

The interment will take place at the Santuario de San Antonio Crypt, Forbes Park, Makati, on Thursday, January 8, 2004 after the Requiem Mass at 4 p.m.

Memorial Masses will be celebrated with the family in Cagayan de Oro City on January 11 and 12, 2004.

Geronimo G. Jacinto Jr.

of Binakayan, Kawit, Cavite

Passed away in the grace of our Lord
on January 3, 2004 at the age of 55.

His remains lie in state at Bahay Ugnayan, Samson Vigil Spaces, 145 Bayan Luma I, Imus, Cavite up to January 8, 2004.

Remains will be transferred to BINAKAYAN IEMELIF CHURCH at Sgt. B. Legaspi St., Binakayan, Kawit, Cavite on January 9, 2004.

Interment will be on Saturday, January 10, 2004 at 3:00 p.m. at Divine Memorial Park at Binakayan, Kawit, Cavite after the celebration of the Holy Mass.

DR. WILFRIDO MAÑAGO CASTRO

of Villa Lizares Subd., Jaro, Iloilo City, Philippines
passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on January 1, 2004 at the age of 85.

His bereaved wife **LETICIA ZERRUDO CASTRO**;

children **Reynaldo** and **Gloria**, **Eleanor** and **Alejandro Que**, **Evelyn** and **Emilie** and **Leonardo Sichon**; grandchildren **Ma. Annabelle**, **Anne Christine**, **Kathryn**, **John Alexander**, **Andrew Phillip**, and **Frances Anne**; great-grandchildren **Rafael Allen** and **Hayden Patrick**; brothers and sisters **Cicero**, **Amancio** (†), **Poligena** (†), **Rene** (†), **Prospero**, **Norma**, **Horacio** (†), **Nora**, **Radenta**, **Ernesto**, **Basilio**, **Joel** and **Leticia**; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law **Adelaida** and **Miguel C. Locsin** (†), **Hernando** and **Dr. Leticia Limjoco Zerrudo**, **Rolando** (†) and **Natividad King Zerrudo**, **Belinda Zerrudo**, **Jose** (†) and **Victoria Cordero Zerrudo**, **Eliseo** and **Flores Depakakibo Zerrudo**, **Rodolfo** (†) and **Dr. Zenaida Corpuz Zerrudo**, **Henrietta Zerrudo** and **Erlinda Zerrudo**; nephews and nieces, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the St. Joseph the Worker Parish Mortuary, Jaro, Iloilo City.

Interment will be held on Saturday, January 10, 2004
at Garden of the Ascencion Memorial Park, Jibao-an, Pavia, Iloilo
after the 8:30 a.m. Mass at the Carmelites Monastery (Nuns), Jaro, Iloilo City.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

SERVILLANA "MILING" BUNDA VDA. DE GANALON

Who passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on December 29, 2003

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy, gave donations, kept vigil and attended the necrological services and funeral rites, and who in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

Rebecca (†) & Glicerio De Los Reyes (†)
Ester & Ceferino L. Follosco
Lilia & Alfonso Andaya
Milagros & Paulino Pagsuyuin
Severino, Jr. & Lilia Ganalon
Zeneida (†) & Rudolph M. Reyes (†)
Myrna & Federico B. Blay, Jr.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

The **COCOLIFE Group of Companies**
joins the entire Lorenzo and Lobregat clans
and the whole city of Zamboanga
in mourning the passing away
on January 2, 2004 of

Doña Maria Clara Lobregat y Lorenzo

Chairman and President of COCOFED and
Founding Director of COCOLIFE.

Our thoughts are with all who, by the death of
Doña Caling, are left without comfort.
May they have the strength to sustain them
in this sad and difficult time.

May our heavenly Father, through His infinite mercy,
grant her eternal peace and joy.

---

*"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son,
that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."*

ENRIQUE FAJARDO SUMINISTRADO

of Quezon City and Nagcarlan, Laguna
Retired BIR RDO

Peacefully joined his Creator on January 5, 2004 at the age of 65.

His bereaved wife **LORNA**; children **ELMA & RAFFY GAUNA, EARLYN & CITO ALVIAR, ENRIQUE ROMULO, EVA MARIE, LEA JURIST & CHING MONTEVERDE, APPLE KATHERINE, JOHN HENRY**; grandchildren, sisters and brother, relatives, friends mourn his passing away and request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Q.C. until January 8, 2004, Thursday morning and will be transferred to Immaculate Concepcion Church, Sta. Cruz, Laguna.

Interment will be on Saturday, January 10, 2004 at the Sta. Cruz Municipal Cemetery, Sta. Cruz, Laguna at 1:00 p.m. after the Mass at the Immaculate Concepcion Catholic Church, Sta. Cruz, Laguna.

MARIO S. PABLO, M.D.

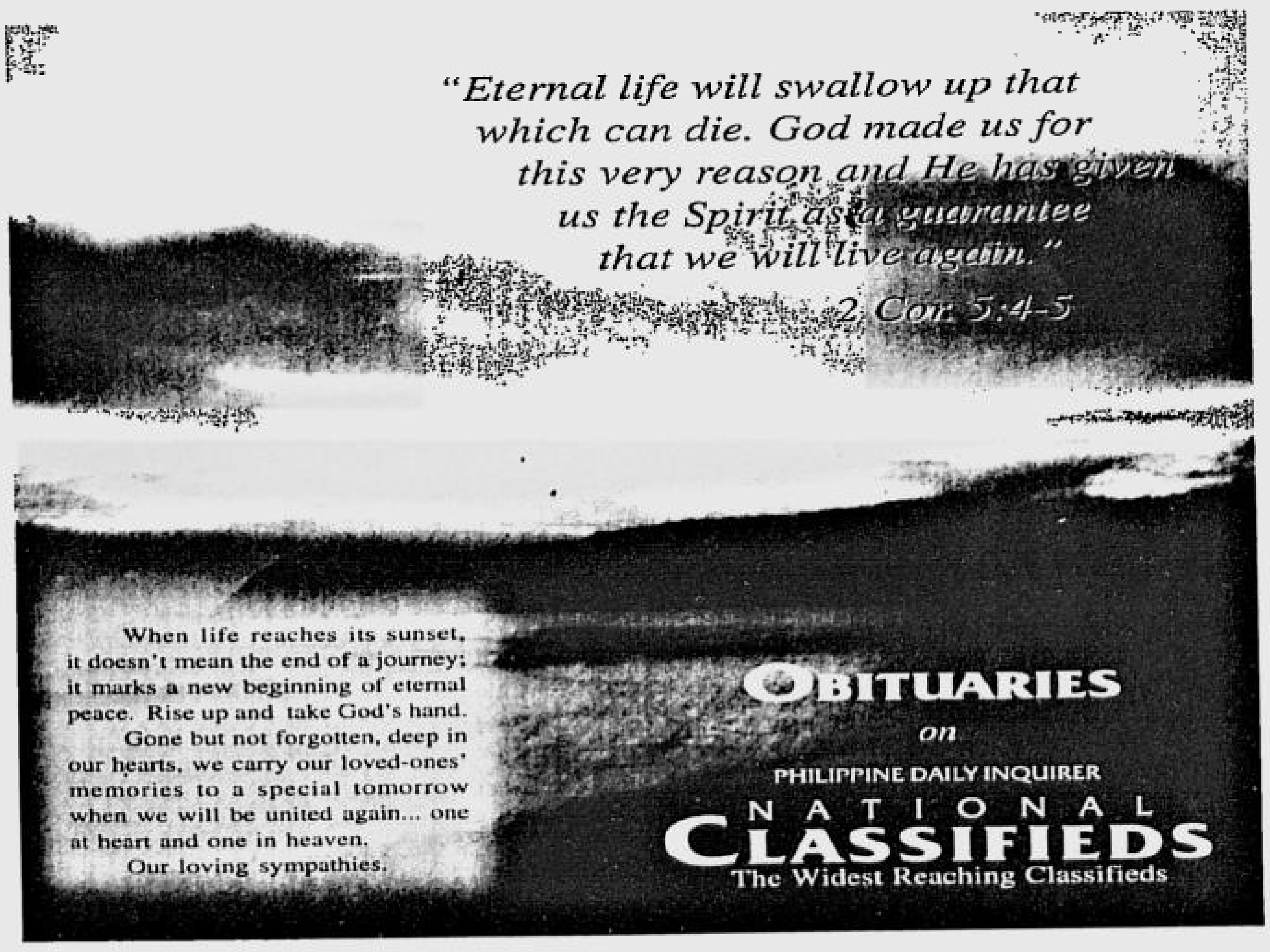
of Aparri, Cagayan
UP College of Medicine Class '42
Knight of St. Sylvester
Papal Awardee ProEcclesia et Pontifice

*Died in the Grace of the Lord on January 4, 2004
at the age of 85.*

His bereaved wife **Rito Kanapi**; children **Monina-Arnold**, **Tony** (+)-**Joyce**, **Lita-Ching**, **Me-an-James**, **Marito**; grandchildren **Rolf**, **Janna**, **Kriscel**, **Ronn**, **Ramon**, **Jim**, **Tonini**, and **Pam**; brothers **Fidelino**, **Ignacio**, **Rodolfo**; sisters **Pacita**, **Josefina**, **Felipe**, **Cristeta** (+); brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law; **Diding**, other relatives and friends request the readers to pray for his eternal repose.

His body lies in state at the ancestral house at 1 Bonifacio St. Aparri, Cagayan.

Interment will be on January 10, 2004 after the 10:00 AM Mass at the St. Peter Thelmo Parish Chruch, Aparri, Cagayan.



*"Eternal life will swallow up that
which can die. God made us for
this very reason and He has given
us the Spirit as a guarantee
that we will live again."*
2 Cor. 5:4-5

When life reaches its sunset, it doesn't mean the end of a journey; it marks a new beginning of eternal peace. Rise up and take God's hand.

Gone but not forgotten, deep in our hearts, we carry our loved-ones' memories to a special tomorrow when we will be united again... one at heart and one in heaven.

Our loving sympathies.

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"I am the resurrection and the life; he that
believeth in Me, though he were dead,
yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and
believeth in Me shall never die." ***John 11: 25-26***

MANUEL D. MALLARE, SR.

Former Mayor of Gapan City

Born: June 17, 1920
Died in the grace of our Lord
on January 6, 2004 at the age of 83.

His loving wife **Quiteria** (+); **Evangeline**; children **Jose Maria** (+), **Manuel Jr.** and **Rebecca**, **Alex** and **Marina**, **Emma**, and **Emmanuel**; grandchildren **Paolo**, **Gino**, **Bea**, **Patricia**, and **Luigi** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Mallare's residence #328 San Vicente, Gapan City, Nueva Ecija.

Interment will be at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 11, 2004 at the Gapan City Cemetery.

PEOPLE at WORK

E-mail: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Raul O. Marcelo**
Subsection Editor **Regina Galang Reyes**

Mommy talents empower mothers through radio

MYLENE Segundera-Bass (R) with her boss, Linnie Mayoralgo Dinopol, Southern Broadcasting Network VP and Mom's Radio executive producer. RUDY ESPERAS

By Candy G. Villanueva

ALL ABOUT WORK

MYLENE Segundera-Bass wakes up early in the morning to prepare breakfast for four-year-old Julian. No *yaya* to do this. She wouldn't have it any other way. After fussing over the little boy, she whisks him away to school but not before planting a big kiss on the cheek. When the morning buzz has finally settled, she retreats to her extension office at home, and busies herself with phone calls, articles, research materials, scripts and correspondences.

By noon, the little scholar returns and Segundera-Bass is back to mommy mode. In a few hours, when the rest of the working world is about to call it a day, she rushes to the radio station to meet with other mommies to discuss remedies for common illnesses, diet concerns, food trends and parenting issues for the benefit of hundreds of listening mommies from all over the country. This is just an ordinary day for a mommy-talent like Mylene Segundera-Bass.

Segundera-Bass and many other mommy-talents like her make up the crew of Southern Broadcasting Network's (SBN) Mom's Radio. Launched this year, FM station's Mom's Radio is a full-time program that celebrates the gift of motherhood. Aired in six provinces in the country, Mom's Radio recently won the Catholic Mass Media Awards for Best Radio Educational Program for their "Morning Chat." Mom's Radio can be heard in Bacolod (dyCP FM 90.3), Cebu (dyAP FM 88.3), Davao (dxSS FM 97.9), Laoag (dwSN FM 97.9), Vigan (dwIS FM 98.9) and Cagayan de Oro (dxNY FM 107.9).

Mom's Radio's announcers and hosts are called mommy-talents because aside from the full-time job on air, they are also full-time dedicated mothers. After the hustle and bustle of the household, mommy-talents shift to the office to develop a well-structured program grid for the different programs of Mom's Radio. It is also the responsibility of mommy-talents to find topics and information that would greatly help and benefit mothers.

More importantly, it is Segundera-Bass' goal as host for the "Morning Chat" or Mom's Radio "to communicate these ideas effectively as I can within the limited time I am given to discuss the day's topic." A mommy talent is on air in behalf of all the mothers listening to the program. "When an expert is onboard, I try to pitch questions, which I feel another mommy would ask given a chance to have a free consultation with one, whether they are a pediatrician, an early childhood education expert, a parent of a child with a disability etc.," says Segundera-Bass.

Since a mommy-talent is a radio host, good communication skills are naturally a requirement for the profession. A clear, strong and friendly voice is also welcome over the airwaves. Most radio hosts and personalities have Broadcast Communications degrees tucked under their belts, or aprons in this case. "I graduated from the University of the Philippines in Diliman's College of Mass Communication. It helps that I took up Broadcast Communication in college, although I don't think I really thought I'd one day work as a radio program host then," says Segundera-Bass.

All the mentioned qualifications only come second to passion. According to Segundera-Bass, mommy-talents must have "a desire to reach out and communicate with others and a love for being a mother."

Segundera-Bass goes on air regularly with a mommy guest or resource person. Because going on air entails extensive research and study, Segundera-Bass feels that clarity and organization of thought is a must for mommy-talents like her. "A desire to learn knew things is a definite prerequisite because it isn't a joke reading through the volumes of material we have to read up on before we tackle segments that require us to create an image of being a 'jill-of-all-trades.'"

Finally Segundera-Bass adds, "Equally important is your ability to outwit a common pitfall of treating the responsibilities of your job as "work" because in radio, it will show in the way we communicate with our audience."

The 12 to 14 hour "talkathon" taping sessions could sometimes be a strain not only for the vocal cords but for motherhood as well. But risking sore throats and raspy voices is a small price to pay in exchange for the rewards of being a mommy-talent. "I have that opportunity to get leads on everything from the latest kiddie clothing sale, age appropriate movies, news on women's health, a parenting trick that worked and that I could get paid talking to them! That in having a mommy-pediatrician to interview, I get to ask questions I myself would like to know as a mommy, and save on the consultation. It's the knowledge freebies, basically," says Segundera-Bass for starters.

Being a mother is an advantage for mommy-talents. "I have real experiences to draw from and I use these to connect with our mommy audience." Looking at it from the other perspective, being a mommy-talent also helps in motherhood. "I look forward to the topics because I know that in the course of doing the segment I will come home having acquired a new knowledge that I could use to make me a better mommy," shares the "Morning Chat's" host.

Since a mommy-talent is first and foremost a mother, it is important that she is able to develop a good work-life balance. Other mommy-talents have day jobs and have to work around their dual roles as mother and career woman in addition to the radio-hosting job.

How does one cope? Segundera-Bass calls it magic. Technology has afforded her the chance to multitask quite effectively. "With the magic of cell phones, fax, text messaging, answering machines accessible from outside our work bases, email, IM and call forwarding combined, I somehow get all things done and still not compromise the time I spend with my four-year-old son, Julian."

Recognizing employees amid turbulent times

By John Rojo

IN this unpredictable and turbulent business environment, inspiring and rewarding employees remains a primary challenge to business leaders and HR practitioners. "Doing more with less" has become a standard business mantra, hence the old ways and formulas for motivating employees to become productive no longer apply and the call has been made for creative solutions to this organizational challenge.

Bayan Telecommunications (BayanTel) is one company that is amidst innumerable challenges as a business, and yet believes strategic emphasis should be placed on employee rewards and recognition programs. Mr. Philip T. Ruiz III, Bayantel's vice president for human resources and organization development, believes this is an inherent mission of the company's management. According to Mr. Ruiz, "Management, in partnership with its HROD group, should be able to formulate a framework for a rewards and recognition program that supports the overall business objectives of the organization. This framework should enable the CEO and all employees to link rewards and recognition to achieve better results for the company."

Rewards program

Mr. Ruiz shared that in BayanTel, this is exactly how they are attempting to heed the call of creative solutions to recognizing employees amidst turbulent times: creating a comprehensive rewards and recognition program that links fixed rewards—such as merit salary increases or promotional salary increases—with purely variable rewards program that hinges on the accomplishment of specific business strategies and objectives. The key however, is to align all rewards and recognition efforts to business strategy and performance.

"For example, one component of its Rewards and Recognition Program that the company launched this year is a 'Lines and Circuits Challenge' wherein we award cash incentives to employees once we meet the lines and circuits we target to install per quarter. Last September, we surpassed our targets so we gave out P3,000 cash to each employee for meeting the target."

On the other hand, Mr. Ruiz said a recognition program was also designed to celebrate efforts and behaviors towards outstanding accomplishments beyond basic expectations. He also believes that alongside monetary rewards, a sustained recognition program goes a long way in cultivating high self-esteem and outstanding performance among employees.

Emotional Appeal

"A recognition program should appeal to the emotions and pride of individual employees. It is not just a matter of money. An outstanding employee should be identified and recognized to make himself feel important among his peers while setting the benchmark for others to follow. Many of our employees have clamored for this recognition. Now is the best time to make that happen."

Mr. Ruiz relates that BayanTel has instituted both corporate-wide and localized recognition programs while requiring its officers to recognize day-to-day achievements of the employees.

The company's grand program to try to achieve and symbolize this end is its "Gawad Galing" celebration, which seeks to recognize outstanding individuals and teams in a celebratory and culminating recognition night in March 2004 where all of BayanTel's employees nationwide will congregate. Top performers based on detailed and performance-based criteria will be honored and awarded in an affair to be viewed nationwide in all BayanTel offices/locations.

"This is the first time we will do this and while one may argue that times are hard, our management believes this is long overdue and the employees are certainly looking forward to it."

Execution

According to Mr. Ruiz, "The success and growth of our organization rests on how our employees will execute our battle plans. If they are rewarded and recognized properly, chances are they will repeat and exceed outstanding performance behaviors and results. And this strengthens the likelihood that the whole team will continue to work excellently as one in the long-term."

Mr. Ruiz added that the "Gawad Galing" event is the first of a continuing effort to creatively reward and recognize its employees. "BayanTel has reached this far as a company thanks largely to the belief and resiliency of its employees. The least we should do is to continuously and creatively find ways and means to recognize them, regardless of the many constraints created by the difficult business environment."

A HIGHLY motivated and focused organization leads to better results, as in the case of BayanTel.

Savoring pure joy

WORKING MOM

An Mercado Alcantara

SO this is how a year should begin, not with larger-than-life fireworks filling the skies with euphoric color bursts, but with a simple story so softly told I almost missed it.

My dear friend, a father of two, described to me the look on his youngest daughter's face when she unwrapped the Barbie he had given her for Christmas. She lit up, he said. Her whole face beamed in pure delight. There was no ecstatic jumping and shrieking, just a wash of true joy, a quiet affirmation that, yes, this is what she wanted most. In that moment he knew this was a perfect moment. Life doesn't get better than this, he said.

And he is right. It doesn't. And as working moms embarking on a new year, I invite you to start the year recalling these bursts of pure intense joy.

Priceless moments

Life doesn't get better than this: my one-year-old Diego rushing up to me when I get home from work, eagerly including me in his play, so very forgiving of all the hours I had spent away from him. Or this: after a sleepless night struggling with asthma, he put his tiny arms around my neck and we danced the samba together. Or this: my thirteen year old, walking over to me after a difficult day at work, and simply draping herself on my shoulder like a rag doll, offering me comfort without words.

Never mind that as soon as you walked into the office, the year already ran pell-mell ahead of you, never mind that the countdown to deadlines already began ticking even before you got to the starting line, never mind that you start the year with a truck load of unfinished business, give in a bit to the sluggishness in your bones and do a working mom's accounting of blessings.

Culture of gratitude

In the past year, what are we most grateful for? What were the moments that lit up our life?

In the coming year, how can we capture more of these fleeting moments of joy? How can we cultivate a culture of gratitude at home and at work?

These fleeting moments are power boosters and only working moms have access. Use this power to tip the work-life balance to your favor in 2004.

(*An Mercado Alcantara is founding editor of Working Mom magazine published by ABS-CBN Publishing. Write to her at* an_alcantara@abs.pinoycentral.com)

What do you need to know to make a budget?

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner

DEAR WW: I have two candidates for a job I am filling. The job requires formulating and handling a sizeable budget. One candidate strikes me as the overall better candidate but no budget experience. The other has lots of budget experience but seems slightly weaker all-around. How highly would you rate budgeting experience?

Hanging in the Balance

Right now you're trying to place a value on the relative skills of these two candidates. But, you know, there are many ways to value human beings. Take minor league baseball pitcher, Andy Keen, for example. When the Meridien Brakemen decided he was no longer of value to their team, they traded him to the Sioux Falls Canaries for the album "Muddy Waters in London." And who's to say who got the better value? Selecting among job candidates can make anyone feel like they're fishing in muddy water, but it sounds like you've already spotted your catch. Go with your gut. If your low-experience candidate is strong overall she'll learn budgeting on the job. Give her the tips below. For more check out "21st Century Supervisor" by Humphrey and Stokes (Jossey-Bass 2000).

Want a crash course in financial management? Most community colleges teach accounting; so do schools online. There's also probably someone in your accounting department who would be willing to serve as a tutor.

Do you find budgeting as exciting as a root canal? I'll admit, I suffer from M.E.G.O. ("my eyes glaze over") when it comes to rows of numbers.

But I've learned that the way to avoid this syndrome is to play a little game: I look at the numbers in my budgets and visualize the THINGS those numbers represent. I visualize my staff people when I look at the salary column. I see Working Wounded hats and books when I look at the "premium items" column. The more I see the things the numbers represent, the more the budget comes to life.

Can you calculate an ROI? One of the most important—and most overlooked—tasks for a budgeter is calculating the return on an investment. Instead of just putting something into your budget because you think it's a good idea, quantify the benefits that will accrue as a result of that expense. First determine the cost of doing business the old way; then figure it again including the product or service you'd like to purchase. This is one of the best investments you can make.

Is there a cushion? Stuff happens. Do you have a contingency plan if an unexpected problem or opportunity arises?

Are you over-relying on numbers? Sure, budgets are important. But so are customer service and marketing and management ... A guy I knew had immaculate financials and ran his business into the ground. So make budgeting just one of the skills you bring to bear on your business.

Give your candidate these tips and I bet that neither one of you will be singing the blues at budget time.

Here are the results of our last workingwounded.com/ABCnews.com poll:

What is the most important tool for completing a budget?

—A dart board, 6.6%
—Experience, 23.2%
—Common sense, 70.1

(*Bob Rosner is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. Email him at* bob@workingwounded.com.)

2bU LIFESTYLE

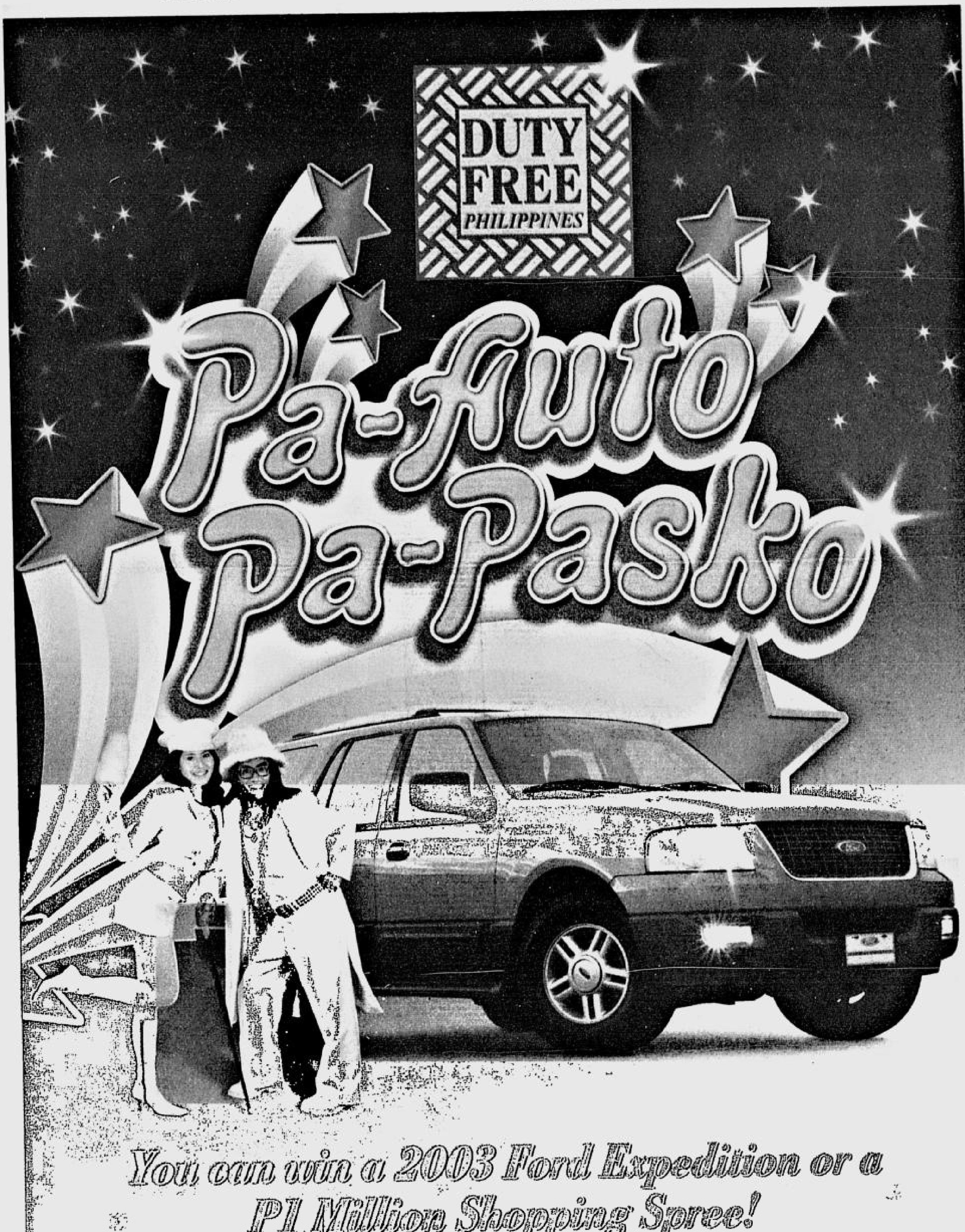
To be you

For feedback, text us at (0918) 382-4061 or (0916) 200-1160
or e-mail us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**
Chief of Correspondents **Pam Pastor**

Fast forward Part 1

What does 2004 have in store for us in fashion, music and technology? Turn the page for what our crystal ball says



You can win a 2003 Ford Expedition or a P1 Million Shopping Spree!

Promo period is from November 23, 2003 to January 15, 2004. Draw date is on January 30, 2004.

PROMO MECHANICS:

1. All qualified travelers pursuant to the existing laws.(Regular Filipino Traveler, OFW, Balikbayan and Foreign Individual Traveler) may avail of the "Pa-Auto, Pa-Pasko!" promo. Promo is valid both in Duty Free Philippines Fiestamall and Duty Free Waterfront in Lahug Cebu.
2. For every $100 worth of purchase, a customer will be entitled to one (1) raffle coupon.
3. Participating customers should present their DFP shopping card and receipts at the claim counter to get their computer printed raffle coupons, affix their signature and drop their entries at designated drop boxes located at Duty Free malls.
4. A participant can only win once. Should his/her name be drawn more than once, he/she will get the bigger prize.
5. Only entries received on or before January 15, 2004 shall be qualified.
6. Raffle draw will be on January 30, 2004 at Duty Free Philippines Fiestamall, at 3:00 p.m.
7. One Million Peso Shopping Spree is in the form of Gift Certificates.
8. Prizes are tax paid and not convertible to cash. All purchases are subject to Customs rules and regulations. Customs duties and taxes for electronic purchases of non-Balikbayans and non-OFWs will be paid in cash and shouldered by the winner.
9. Winners will be notified by registered mail and announced in leading national daily newspapers. Prizes may be claimed at Marketing Department, Duty Free Philippines Fiestamall upon presentation of valid IDs.
10. Employees of Duty Free Philippines, PC&V and their relatives up to second degree of consanguinity or affinity shall not be allowed to join the promo.
11. Prizes not redeemed within 60 days after notification will be forfeited upon approval of DTI.

The best things in life are duty-free.

Under RA 9174, Balikbayans and OFWs arriving between Nov.15 and Jan.15 can shop within 30 days from date of arrival.

PER DTI-NCR PERMIT NO. 3515 SERIES OF 2003

zed Hitlist

Surprising hits.

LOGO LOVE 1
LOGO SCORPIONS 2
LOGO OTSO 3
LOGO DREAMLUV 4
LOGO LUVROSE 5
LOGO SEXYBABY 6
LOGO DOLFINS 7
LOGO FRENCH 8
LOGO SEXYMA 9
LOGO HOTBEYB 10
LOGO TRIBAL1 11
LOGO ULUVME 12
LOGO SKULLFIRE 13
LOGO HARTLOVE 14
LOGO DRAGON7 15
LOGO LUVBIRDS 16
LOGO KISS4U1 17
LOGO MRSUAVE1 18
LOGO MEYOU 19
LOGO CUTEBER 20

1 Mr. Suave
Parokya Ni Edgar
TONE MRSUAVE

2 Spaghetti Song
Sexbomb
TONE SPAG

3 Happy
Rolling Stones
TONE HAPPY

4 Maybe
Enrique Iglesias
TONE MAYBE

5 Where Is The Love
Black Eyed Peas
TONE WERISLUV

6 Perfect
True Faith
TONE PERFECT

7 I'll Be
Edwin McCain
TONE IBE

8 Kanlungan
Noel Cabangon
TONE KANLUNGAN

9 Forever's Not Enough
Sarah Geronimo
TONE 4EVERSNOT

10 Unwell
Matchbox 20
TONE UNWELL

11 Awit Ng Kabataan
Rivermaya
TONE KABATAAN

12 From The Inside
Linkin Park
TONE FROMTHE

13 Hey Whatever
Westlife
TONE HEYWHAT

14 Behind Blue Eyes
Limp Bizkit
TONE BEHINDB

15 Sweet Dreams
Eurythmics
TONE SWEETD

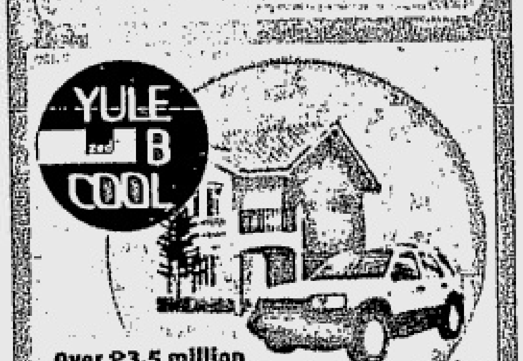
16 Broken Vow
Lara Fabian
TONE BROKEN

17 Mr. Suave Ver. 2
Parokya Ni Edgar
TONE MRSUAVE2

18 Clarity
John Mayer
TONE CLARITY

19 Gold
Spandau Ballet
TONE GOLD

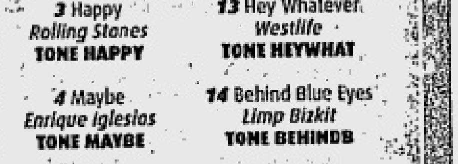
20 Crazy Little Thing Called Love
Michael Buble
TONE CRAZYL



Over ₱3.5 million in cool, cool prizes!

Send YULE to 288 and download now!

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3787, Series of 2003



Get a chance to win a fleet of 5 Mitsubishi Adventures!
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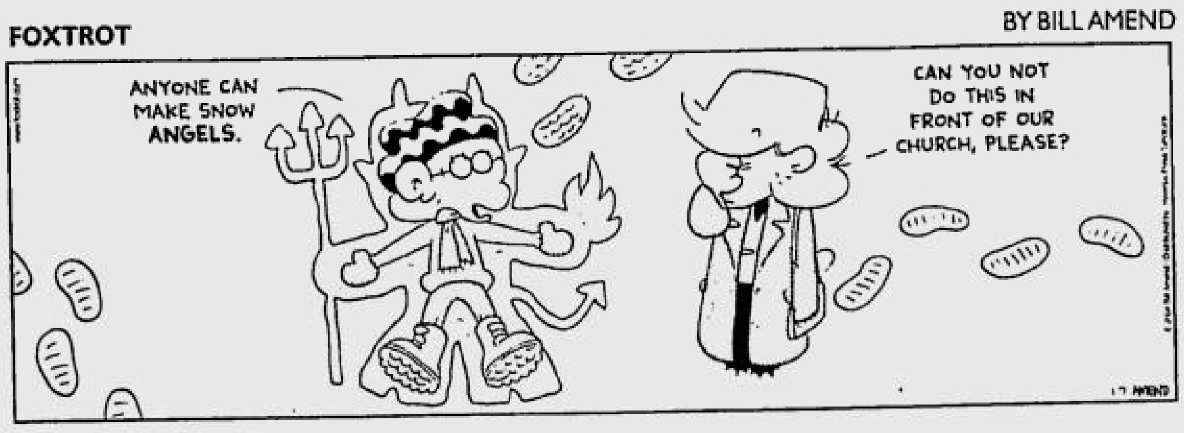
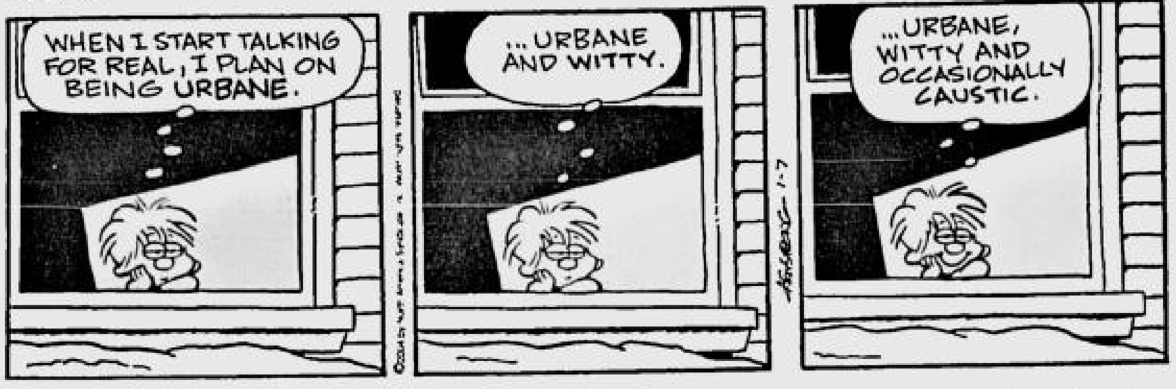
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


ANYONE CAN MAKE SNOW ANGELS.
CAN YOU NOT DO THIS IN FRONT OF OUR CHURCH, PLEASE?
1-7 AMEND

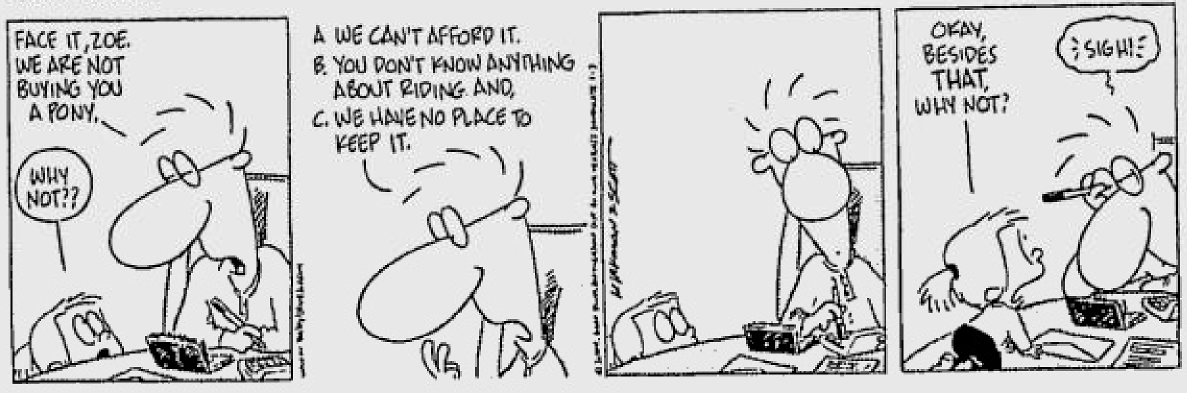
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


WHEN I START TALKING FOR REAL, I PLAN ON BEING URBANE.
...URBANE AND WITTY.
...URBANE, WITTY AND OCCASIONALLY CAUSTIC.
1-7

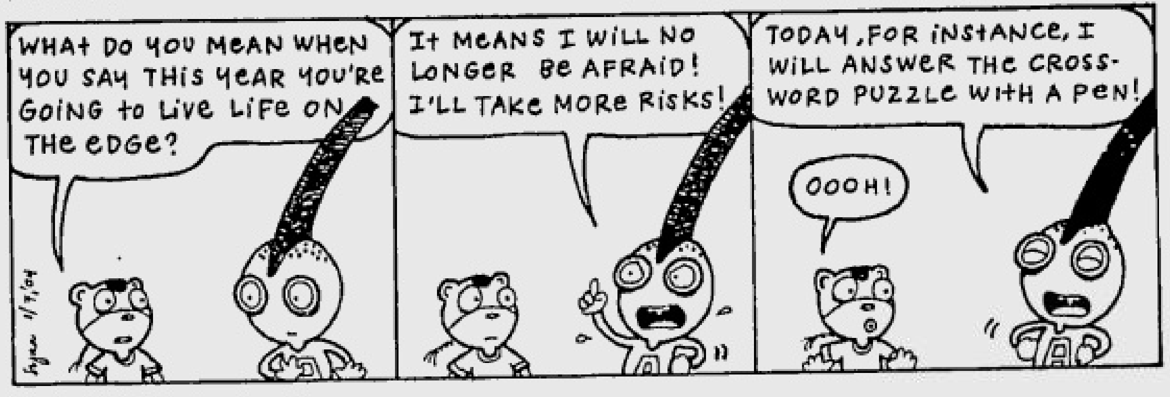
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


FACE IT, ZOE. WE ARE NOT BUYING YOU A PONY.
WHY NOT??
A. WE CAN'T AFFORD IT.
B. YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT RIDING AND,
C. WE HAVE NO PLACE TO KEEP IT.
OKAY, BESIDES THAT, WHY NOT?
SIGH!

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WHAT DO YOU MEAN WHEN YOU SAY THIS YEAR YOU'RE GOING TO LIVE LIFE ON THE EDGE?
IT MEANS I WILL NO LONGER BE AFRAID! I'LL TAKE MORE RISKS!
TODAY, FOR INSTANCE, I WILL ANSWER THE CROSSWORD PUZZLE WITH A PEN!
OOOH!
1/7/04

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're sensitive to your environment and interested in many things. You sense things that others do not. You have a vivid imagination and easily see life around you with a childlike openness. You do not prejudge; you are tolerant and accepting. Major changes will take place in your life this year.
Birthdate of: Katie Couric, TV journalist; Nicolas Cage, actor; Zora Neal Hurston, folklorist/writer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Today's Full Moon could make you confused. Where should you put your energy—at work and in your career, or at home and with your family? Career comes first now.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Discussions with siblings and relatives might be a bit tense today. That's because today is the Full Moon. Just smile and be patient with everyone. (That is the win/win solution.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You might be confused about whether or not to spend money today or about how to handle a particular financial issue. If you're confused, don't act. Wait until tomorrow.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): It's difficult knowing whom to put first today—yourself or others? (This is the only Full Moon in your sign all year.) It's OK to put yourself first today.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Be patient with coworkers. You are naturally a take-charge type. Others do not always want to respect this. Go slowly today.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Romantic situations leave you feeling perplexed today. Avoid important decisions. Similarly, go gently when dealing with children today. Some people are emotional during the Full Moon.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): If you feel stressed out talking to a boss or parent today, do not react. Problems tend to build up as the Full Moon approaches; then after it peaks, these problems diminish. Just wait a day.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Take extra precautions driving and walking today. Tension or agitation because of today's Full Moon causes a mildly accident-prone influence.

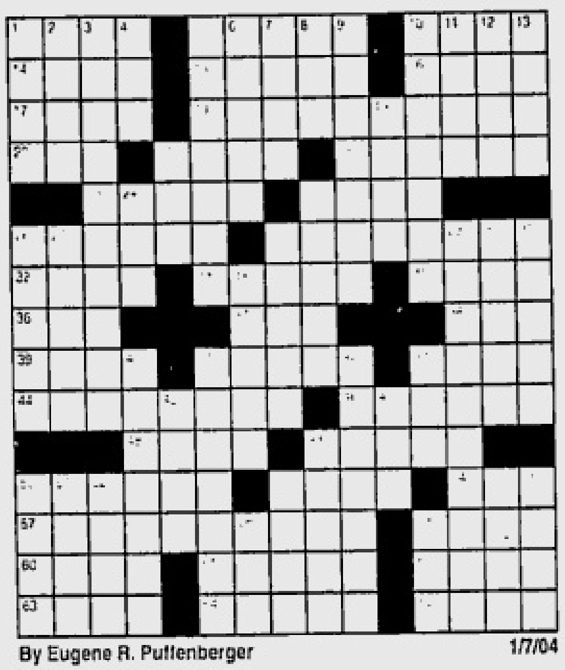
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): If you feel confused about how to spend money today, don't spend it. The Full Moon often pulls a person in two directions. In a day or two, you will know what to do.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is the only Full Moon all year that directly opposes your sign. It could promote tension with someone close to you. Don't even go there. Wait until another time to discuss important matters.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Pent-up energy can be channeled into hard work today. After all, this energy has to go somewhere—you might as well get benefit from it.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Do not insist on getting your own way with romantic interests or children. Today's Full Moon makes people a bit excitable.

DAILY CROSSWORD

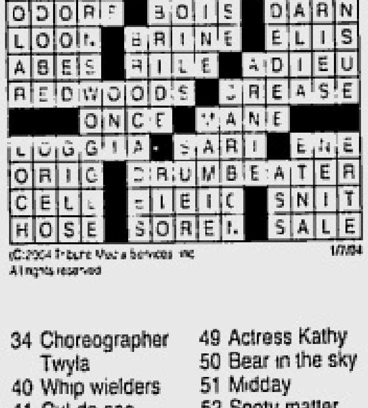


By Eugene R. Puffenberger
Houston, TX
1/7/04

ACROSS
1 Christie's title
5 Actor Greene
10 Floppy storage device
14 Greek Cupid
15 Hunter of stars?
16 Jamaican citrus fruit
17 Fewer
18 Illegally parked car disabler
20 Fond du __, WI
21 Intensely eager
22 Watered silks
23 "Bellefleur" author
25 Sot
26 Mooring rope
28 1991 Joe Pesci movie
32 Shade trees
33 Porkers' pads
35 "Da Ya Think I'm __?"
36 Grippe
37 That girl
38 Young goat
39 Legendary marksman
41 Had the nerve
43 Cairo's river
44 Athletic shoes
46 One who makes amends
48 Break sharply
49 Take along
50 Like wild horses
53 Damage
54 Cotillion gal
57 Apple choice
59 Throw
60 Basic taste sensation
61 Patrick or Bruce
62 Complexion problem
63 Pismires
64 Apparel
65 Distort

DOWN
1 Computer maker
2 Locality
3 Cocktail choice
4 Start of something?
5 Motel guests
6 Sandwich cookies
7 Frodo's band
8 Fall mo.
9 Foes
10 Fraught with uncertainty
11 Frankenstein's assistant
12 Gin flavor
13 Young foxes
19 Howard and Wood
21 Ingested
24 Pompous sort
25 In what place?
26 Judges weight by lifting
27 Sportscaster Mel
28 Cake levels
29 Chinese dish
30 Imposed absence
31 "The Flying Dutchman" painter
34 Choreographer Twyla
40 Whip wielders
41 Cul-de-sac
42 Strawberry and Dawkins
43 __ sequitur
45 Door handle
47 Actor Curry
49 Actress Kathy
50 Bear in the sky
51 Midday
52 Sooty matter
53 Gargantuan
55 Sea eagle
56 Tooted
58 Part of AFB
59 Possesses

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved



SAGA■SHOAL■FACT
OPAL■MOOLA■IGOR
BELLWETHER■DODO
SSS■ALES■GADGET
■■■HILL■WELL■■■
SABOTS■CASSETTE
ODORS■BOIS■DARN
LOON■BRINE■ELIS
ABES■RILE■ADIEU
REDWOODS■CREASE
■■■ONCE■MANE■■■
LOGGIA■SARI■ENE
ORIG■DRUMBEATER
CELL■EIEIO■SNIT
HOSE■SOREN■SALE

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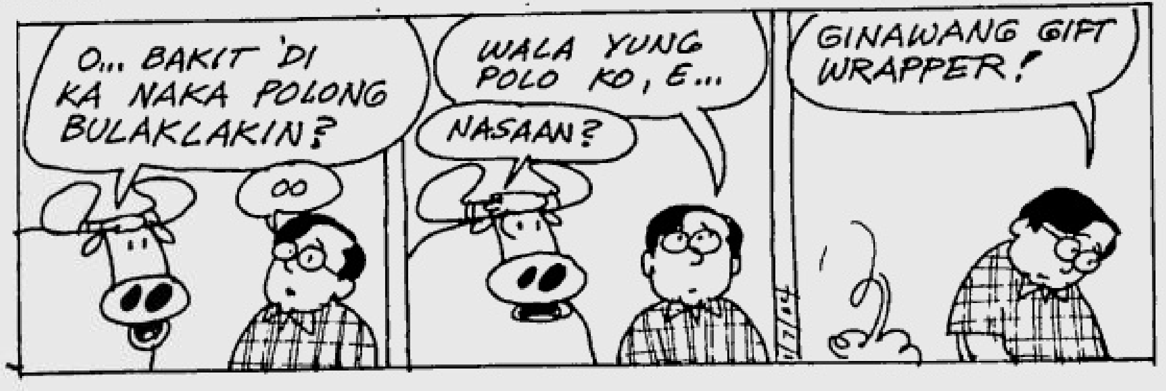
1/7/04

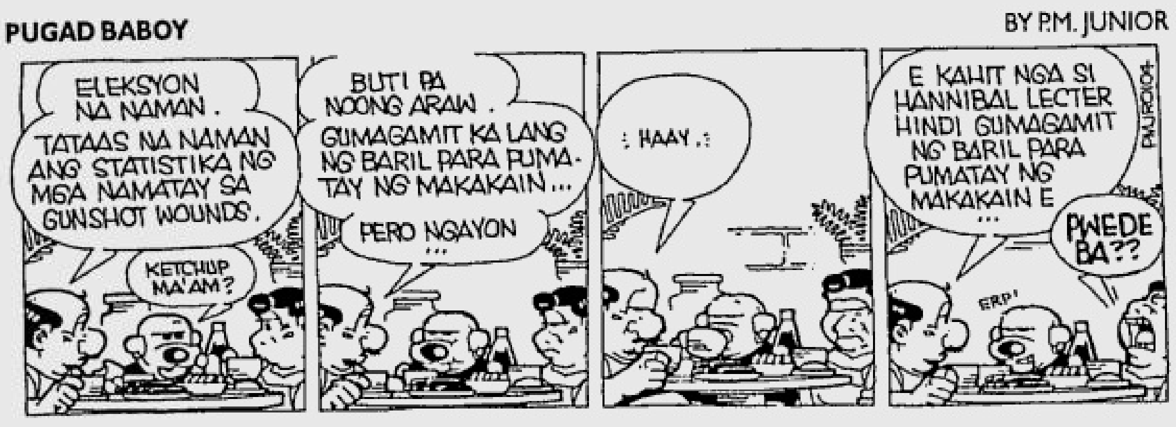
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


O... BAKIT 'DI KA NAKA POLONG BULAKLAKIN?
OO
WALA YUNG POLO KO, E...
NASAAN?
GINAWANG GIFT WRAPPER!

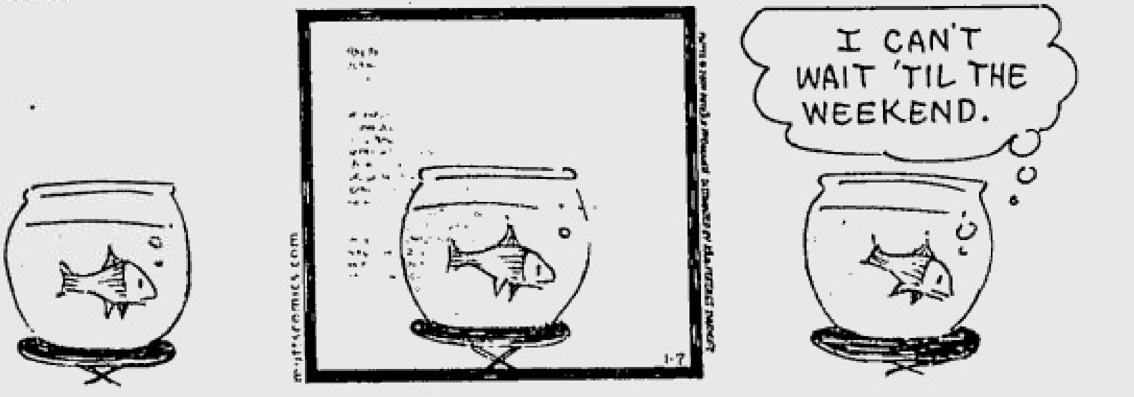
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ELEKSYON NA NAMAN.
TATAAS NA NAMAN ANG STATISTIKA NG MGA NAMATAY SA GUNSHOT WOUNDS.
KETCHUP MA'AM?
BUTI PA NOONG ARAW.
GUMAGAMIT KA LANG NG BARIL PARA PUMATAY NG MAKAKAIN...
PERO NGAYON ...
HAAY.
E KAHIT NGA SI HANNIBAL LECTER HINDI GUMAGAMIT NG BARIL PARA PUMATAY NG MAKAKAIN E ...
PWEDE BA??
ERP!
PAJR0104

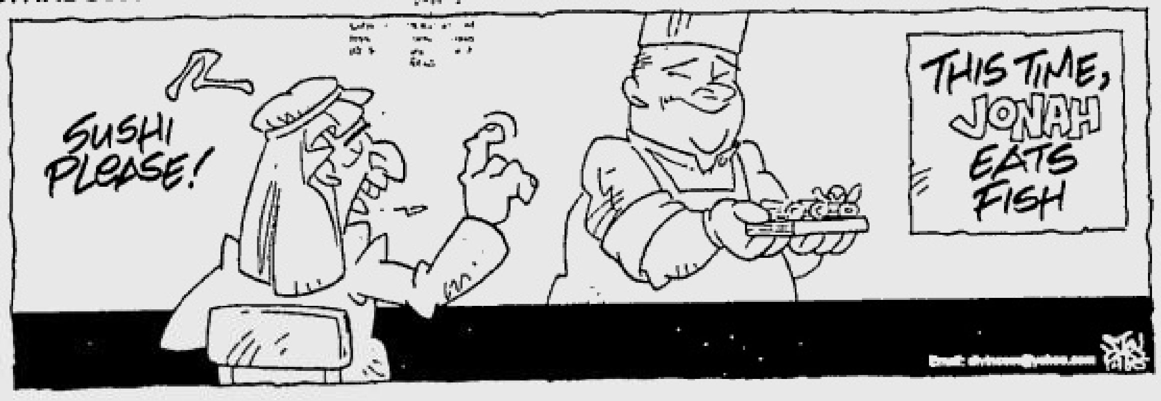
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I CAN'T WAIT 'TIL THE WEEKEND.
1-7

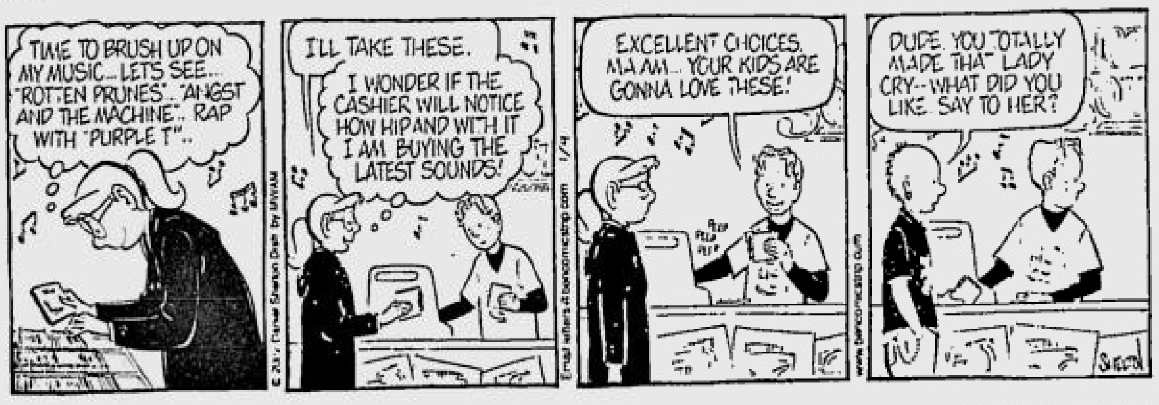
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


SUSHI PLEASE!
THIS TIME, JONAH EATS FISH

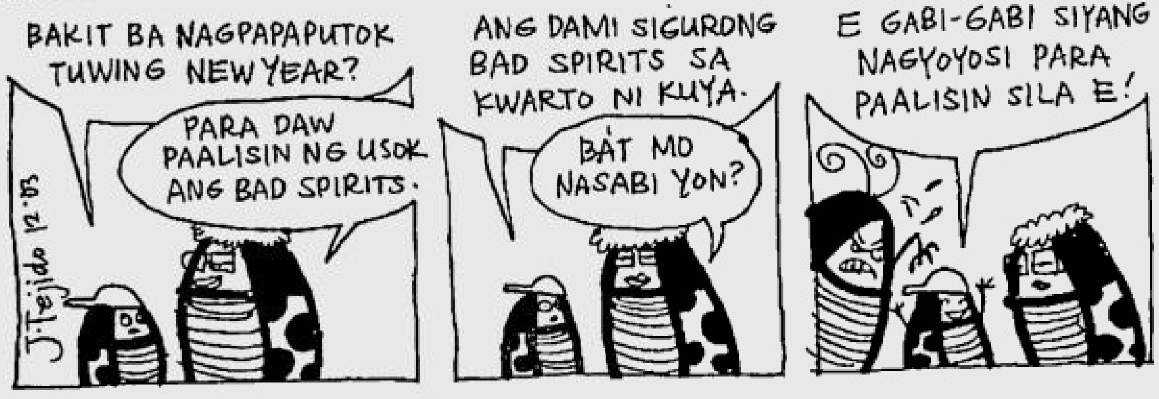
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


TIME TO BRUSH UP ON MY MUSIC... LETS SEE... "ROTTEN PRUNES"... "ANGST AND THE MACHINE"... RAP WITH "PURPLE T"...
I'LL TAKE THESE.
I WONDER IF THE CASHIER WILL NOTICE HOW HIP AND WITH IT I AM BUYING THE LATEST SOUNDS!
EXCELLENT CHOICES, MA'AM... YOUR KIDS ARE GONNA LOVE THESE!
DUDE. YOU TOTALLY MADE THAT LADY CRY-- WHAT DID YOU LIKE SAY TO HER?

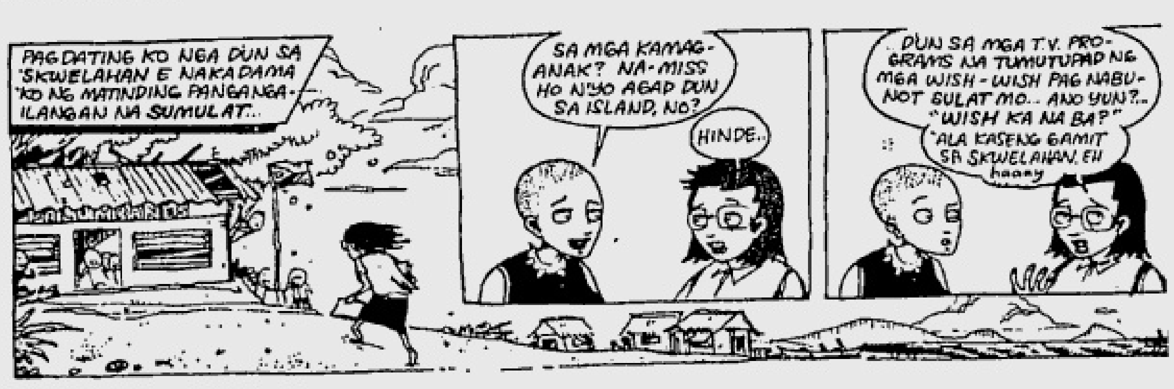
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


BAKIT BA NAGPAPAPUTOK TUWING NEW YEAR?
PARA DAW PAALISIN NG USOK ANG BAD SPIRITS.
ANG DAMI SIGURONG BAD SPIRITS SA KWARTO NI KUYA.
BAT MO NASABI YON?
E GABI-GABI SIYANG NAGYOYOSI PARA PAALISIN SILA E!
J. Tejido 12.'03

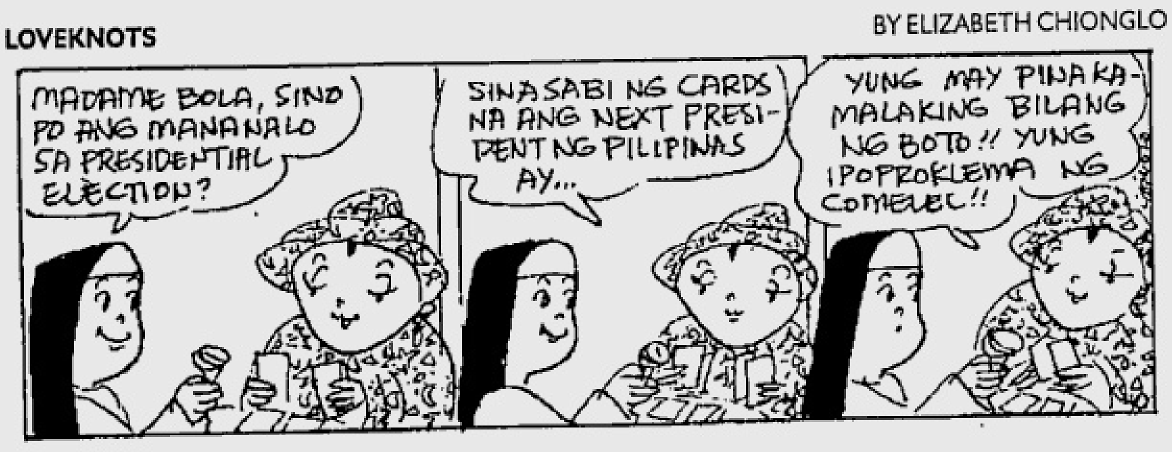
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


PAGDATING KO NGA DUN SA 'SKWELAHAN E NAKADAMA KO NG MATINDING PANGANGAILANGAN NA SUMULAT...
SA MGA KAMAG-ANAK? NA-MISS HO NIYO AGAD DUN SA ISLAND, NO?
HINDE..
DUN SA MGA T.V. PROGRAMS NA TUMUTUPAD NG MGA WISH-WISH PAG NABUNOT SULAT MO... ANO YUN?.. "WISH KA NA BA?"
"ALA KASENG GAMIT SA SKWELAHAN, EH
haaay

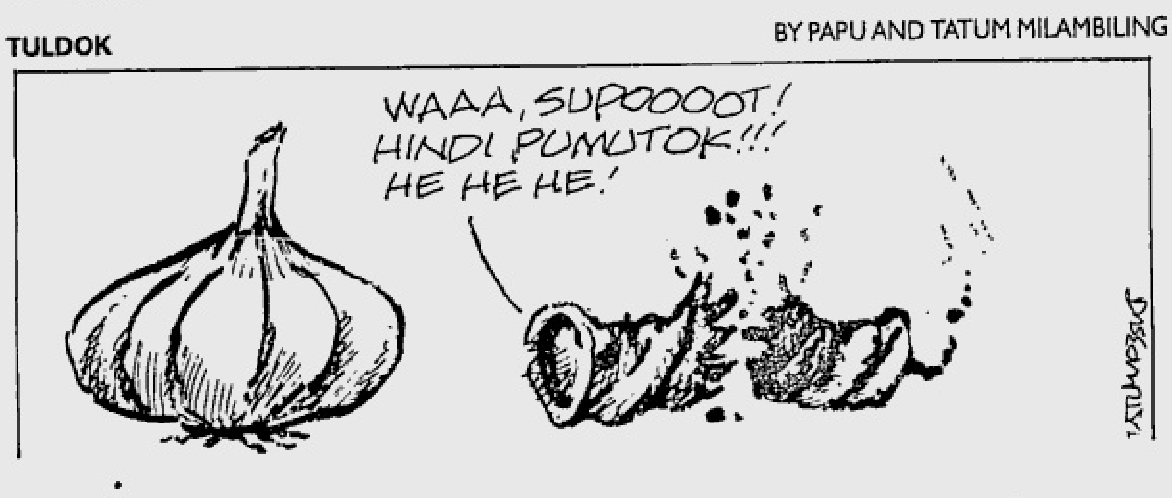
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MADAME BOLA, SINO PO ANG MANANALO SA PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION?
SINASABI NG CARDS NA ANG NEXT PRESIDENT NG PILIPINAS AY...
YUNG MAY PINAKAMALAKING BILANG NG BOTO!! YUNG IPOPROKLEMA NG COMELEC!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


WAAA, SUPOOOOT! HINDI PUMUTOK!!! HE HE HE!

Music, more music

By Maui V. Reyes
2bU! Correspondent

EMO schemo—so some people think it's overrated, while others swear it's the only antidote to teenage angst and every relationship gone wrong. If 2003 was the year for America to shed tears over ex-girlfriends and ex-boyfriends, 2004 will give Manila a taste of the emo craze.

Bands like Plane Divides the Sky and the Laguna-based Typecast are already creating noise in the indie music scene. We just need a highly commercialized emo band to open doors for these guys.

2004 is the year to have your heart broken

DRIP. They're opening doors for Electronica Manila artists.

SPONGECOLA released an EP last year. We're pretty sure they'll create more noise this year.

Emo's not the only thing that will blossom this year. Electronica Manila, a group composed of electronica artists (duh) will share the spotlight with mainstream bands.

After having their own venue at Fete dela Musique last year, there's no doubt that these digital masters will have people flocking to their gigs—just don't invite them to play at any Smart parties.

While more and more kids are picking up guitars and learning how to rock out to their fave tunes (and eventually—hopefully—learn to write their own), the closing of many college organizations' fave gig place, KAFE, would challenge them to have their music heard in other ways.

But distribution would be more a problem for them than producing their demos—2004 sees many new programs that make home recording even easier.

Piracy will become even more rampant, depending on the outcome of this year's elections (but really, we pretty much know what's going to happen, right?).

The digital music revolution may be hotter than ever overseas, but over here, the government has yet to realize what an MP3 is. So keep rocking on with Kazaa until your computer crashes.

Here's a surprising and refreshing prediction: the *kundiman* and *zarzuela* will find their way into mainstream music by the end of the year. Some underground bands are already starting to incorporate these classic forms in their music.

WE asked some music experts what their predictions for 2004 are. Here's what they had to say:

Rap-rock will continue to recede, but hip-hop will continue to influence a lot of other genres. Locally, we're going to hear from a lot of new indie bands, so there's going to be a great variety of new Pinoy music for us. And Michael Jackson will still be in trouble for one reason or another.—**Kristine Fonacier, MTV Ink editor in chief**

For the love of God, no more endless covers of "I'll Be," "Moonlight Over Paris" and boy band-looking acoustic singers. Let's give way to the real rockers. Stop naming everybody "divas," it's irritating enough that there are a lot of them, no need for those weird-sounding titles like "the inspirational diva." In hip-hop, stop the fronting; 95 percent of the lyrics they come up with are fake. Stop the faking, and don't hate, just congratulate; if "Aplde Ap" (Black Eyed Peas) can make it globally, we can too.—**Rico Robles, RX 93.1 DJ**

Maganda takbo ng OPM this year than last year... As far as EMI is concerned, we're pushing for more local artists, like Bamboo. If other companies are afraid of OPM, we're signing them. Acoustic is dying now... That was so last year.—**Francis Guevarra, EMI local A&R manager**

Street fashion goes to the streets again

By Jason Doplito
2bU! Correspondent

PUNK rock at the Marc Jacobs show. Satin shorts, lace-up boots and smokey eyes for the rebellious student

IT'S the hottest accessory of the year: Lace-up boots.

YOU think it's over for the Converse kids out there? Not for Marc Jacobs, who thinks punk rock is the way to go this year. Think '80s but with a splash of pastel and chutzpah—fingerless gloves, satin short shorts and accessories that scream out of control. And he's not the only designer who believes in recycling the good old years of past trends; Prada thinks it's time to raid grandpa's closet and recover those vintage clothing. From paisley prints to ties tucked into cardigans, the preppy look is back (again) as if it never went out of style.

The look, in general, varies from laid-back casual to radical punk. Open-buttoned shirts, loose trousers and neutral colors should do the trick if you want to look breezy in 2004. For the dissenters out there, motorcycle chic is the way to go, with vest tops and chains as the choice accessories. If you're going for ultra-trendy, wear a scarf around your neck—if you're a guy. And for the ladies out there, shiny boots should make everyone's head turn, looking down.

[illegible]Y meets girl. Wear the white [illegible]t as in this [illegible]rogynous [illegible]up.

DETAIL of boxing shorts at the D&G fashion show. Flowers should also make a good accessory for pants and shoes.

Punk rock is the way to go this year, according to hot designer Marc Jacobs

HAIR accessories adorn the handle of this shoulder bag.

LAID-BACK and comfy wear for the color of summer, orange

IT'S necktie and cardigans at the Prada Spring collection.

GET the understated cowboy look with a vest, scarf and camel brown boots

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
WINNER BEST PICTURE
HILDA KORONEL ANGEL AQUINO
and
SHARON CUNETA
ERIC QUIZON RICKY DAVAO
JULIO PACHECO special participation RAYMOND BAGATSING
A MARK MEILY FILM
CRYING LADIES
a heartwarming comedy
Winner of the BEST PICTURE AWARD in the 2003 Metro Manila Film Festival, and the only entry GRADED-A by the Cinema Evaluation Board.
A Tony Gloria Production
www.cryingladies.com

Music, more music

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Bands like Plane Divides the Sky and the Laguna-based Typecast are already creating noise in the indie music scene. We just need a highly commercialized emo band to open doors for these guys.

Emo's not the only thing that will blossom this year. Electronica Manila, a group composed of electronica artists (duh) will share the spotlight with mainstream bands.

After having their own venue at Fete dela Musique last year, there's no doubt that these digital masters will have people flocking to their gigs—just don't invite them to play at any Smart parties.

While more and more kids are picking up guitars and learning how to rock out to their fave tunes (and eventually—hopefully—learn to write their own), the closing of many college organizations' fave gig place, KAFE, would challenge them to have their music heard in other ways.

But distribution would be more a problem for them than producing their demos—2004 sees many new programs that make home recording even easier.

Piracy will become even more rampant, depending on the outcome of this year's elections (but really, we pretty much know what's going to happen, right?).

The digital music revolution may be hotter than ever overseas, but over here, the government has yet to realize what an MP3 is. So keep rocking on with Kazaa until your computer crashes.

Here's a surprising and refreshing prediction: the *kundiman* and *zarzuela* will find their way into mainstream music by the end of the year. Some underground bands are already starting to incorporate these classic forms in their music.

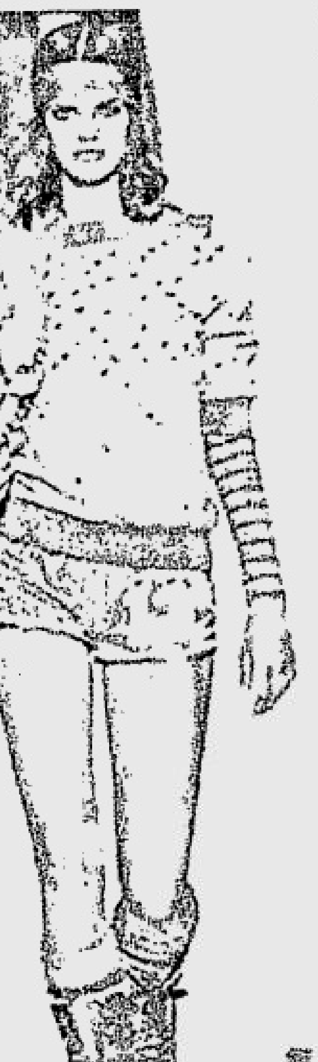
WE asked some music experts what their predictions for 2004 are. Here's what they had to say:

Rap-rock will continue to recede, but hip-hop will continue to influence a lot of other genres. Locally, we're going to hear from a lot of new indie bands, so there's going to be a great variety of new Pinoy music for us. And Michael Jackson will still be in trouble for one reason or another.—**Kristine Fonacier, MTV Ink editor in chief**

For the love of God, no more endless covers of "I'll Be," "Moonlight Over Paris" and boy band-looking acoustic singers. Let's give way to the real rockers. Stop naming everybody "divas," it's irritating enough that there are a lot of them, no need for those weird-sounding titles like "the inspirational diva." In hip-hop, stop the fronting; 95 percent of the lyrics they come up with are fake. Stop the faking, and don't hate, just congratulate; if "Apl.de Ap" (Black Eyed Peas) can make it globally, we can too.—**Rico Robles, RX 93.1 DJ**

Maganda takbo ng OPM this year than last year... As far as EMI is concerned, we're pushing for more local artists, like Bamboo. If other companies are afraid of OPM, we're signing them. Acoustic is dying now... That was so last year.—**Francis Guevarra, EMI local A&R manager**

St[illegible] f[illegible] [illegible] goes to the streets again


PUNK rock at the Marc Jacobs show. Satin shorts, lace-up boots and smokey eyes for the rebellious student

IT'S the hottest accessory of the year: Lace-up boots.

By Jason Doplito
2bU! Correspondent

YOU think it's over for the Converse kids out there? Not for Marc Jacobs, who thinks punk rock is the way to go this year. Think '80s but with a splash of pastel and chutzpah—fingerless gloves, satin short shorts and accessories that scream out of control. And he's not the only designer who believes in recycling the good old years of past trends; Prada thinks it's time to raid grandpa's closet and recover those vintage clothing. From paisley prints to ties tucked into cardigans, the preppy look is back (again) as if it never went out of style.

The look, in general, varies from laid-back casual to radical punk. Open-buttoned shirts, loose trousers and neutral colors should do the trick if you want to look breezy in 2004. For the dissenters out there, motorcycle chic is the way to go, with vest tops and chains as the choice accessories. If you're going for ultra-trendy, wear a scarf around your neck—if you're a guy. And for the ladies out there, shiny boots should make everyone's head turn, looking down.

DETAIL of boxing shorts at the D&G fashion show. Flowers should also make a good accessory for pants and shoes.

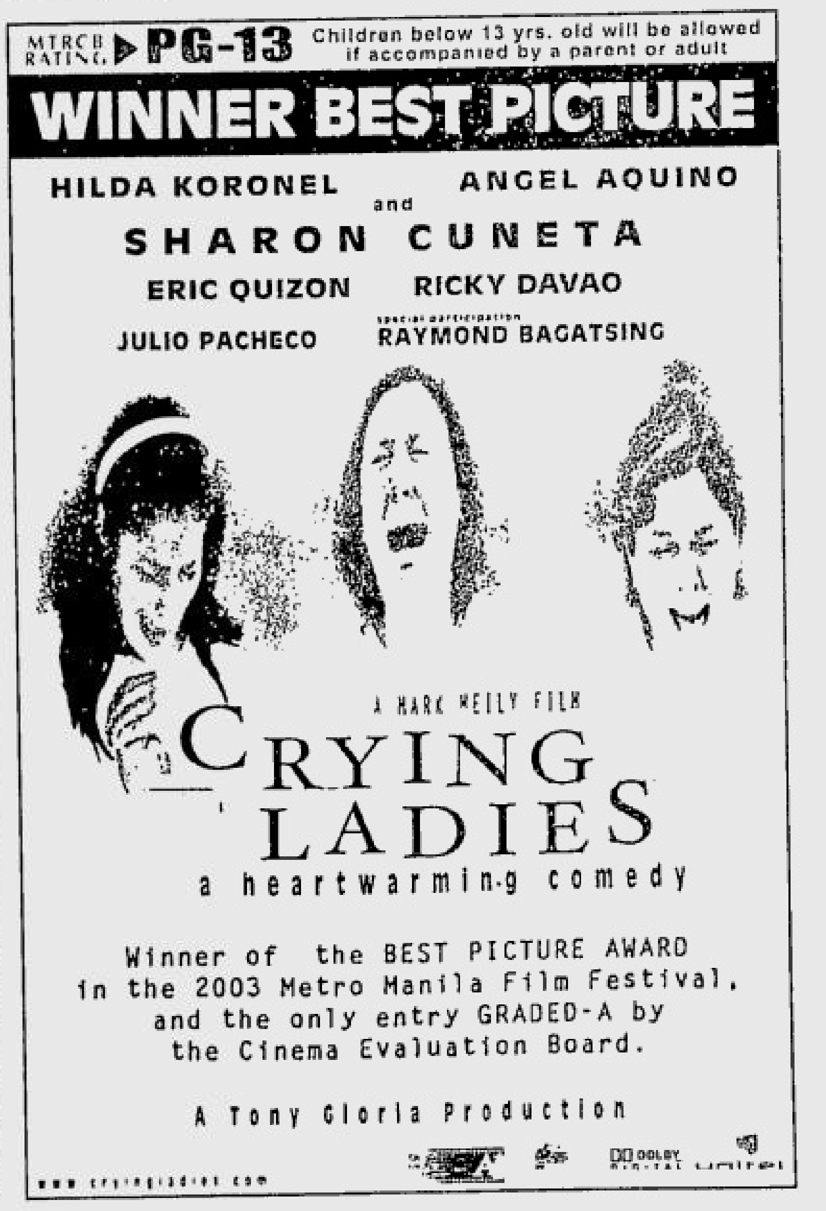
Punk rock is the way to go this year, according to hot designer Marc Jacobs

HAIR accessories adorn the handle of this shoulder bag.

LAID-BACK and comfy wear for the color of summer, orange

IT'S necktie and cardigans at the Prada Spring collection.

GET the understated cowboy look with a vest, scarf and camel brown boots


MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
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HILDA KORONEL ANGEL AQUINO
and
SHARON CUNETA
ERIC QUIZON RICKY DAVAO
JULIO PACHECO special participation RAYMOND BAGATSING
A MARK MEILY FILM
CRYING LADIES
a heartwarming comedy
Winner of the BEST PICTURE AWARD in the 2003 Metro Manila Film Festival, and the only entry GRADED-A by the Cinema Evaluation Board.
A Tony Gloria Production
www.cryingladies.com

Technology forecasts for 2004

By Gary H. Mercado
Contributor

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Migs Paraz—A programming guru for nine years now, Migs is well-known in local software circles for his topnotch work.

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I don't see any groundbreaking new technology to hit the car industry anytime soon, like fuel cell or hydrogen engines or even relatively down-to-earth hybrid (gasoline/electric) engines which are already being marketed abroad.

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Wouldn't it be great if every Filipino became computer literate? We already lead as a country in the sense that we all have a basic grasp of English. What more if every child grows up with a basic know-how of computers and the Internet?

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Sheryl Mirra Koo, 25 years old, general manager, I^Tech Inc., former product manager for O2 XDA, Sony Clie, Handspring Handhelds, Sony Vaio and after sales support for XDA2.

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Expect a lot of convergence devices such as PDA phones, megapixel camera phones, smartphones and portable audio players.

Also expect wifi to boom—wifi phones, wifi PDAs, wifi service providers and specifically VOIP via wifi.

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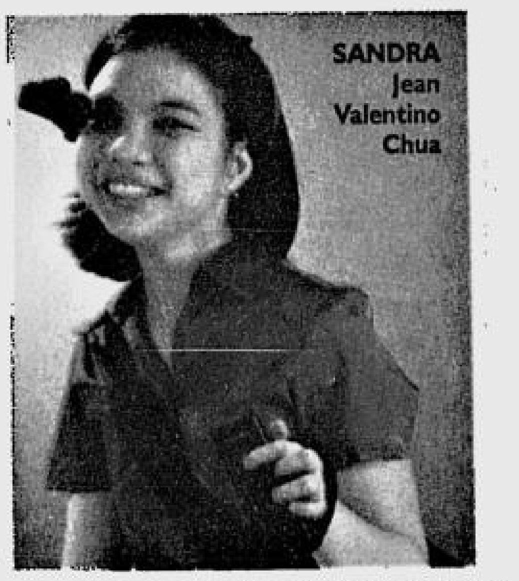
3g—third-generation networks and phones which would allow video streaming and video telephony via phone.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Students and teachers should realize that it's not enough for people to have a degree in computer science. Employers need people who can solve real-world problems and learn independently. Teachers need to undergo training and explore different ways of challenging their students. Students need to realize that the hyped-up jobs in IT require a lot of hard work.

If I had my way, more people would discover the joy of contributing to open source through programming, testing, or writing documentation. They'd realize that they can help innovate, that they are not limited to just being users but they can actually make a difference in technology.

If I had my way, IT wouldn't be about technology. It would be about us.

E-mail the author at gary@exchange.ph

SMART Buddy Pre-paid zed NeWlist

It's gonna be a big bang!

New logos

LOGO FLOWLOVE
LOGO PLANELUV
LOGO HSTUFF
LOGO MISSMUCH
LOGO HARTANGEL
LOGO TOMADOR
LOGO DOLP
LOGO LOOKLUV
LOGO 4MULACAR
LOGO DRAGR
LOGO CRAZYLOVE
LOGO HAIRMISS
LOGO CUTECAT1
LOGO SLEEPALL
LOGO ILYGAL
LOGO CATPLEP
LOGO PERFECTO
LOGO BEERPA
LOGO FRENDS4
LOGO GIMIKERA
LOGO OTSO

PIC KISSES4U
PIC SEEU2
PIC DREAMING
PIC BINGWIT
PIC HARTMINE
PIC KISSDOG
PIC ILYCODE
PIC BFREND
PIC MEANT1
PIC KITCOOL
PIC KISSMY
PIC LUVFIRST
PIC HLIPS1
PIC MISSINGU1
PIC KISSFROG

New ring tones

Clarity	John Mayer	TONE CLARITY
Have It All	Foo Fighters	TONE HAVIT
Fruitcake	Eraserheads	TONE FRUITCAKE
There's Gotta Be More To Life	Stacie Orrico	TONE THERESG
Hunting High And Low	AHA	TONE HUNTING
For Once In My Life	Michael Buble	TONE 4ONCE
Splits Screen Sadness	John Mayer	TONE SPLITS
Rain On Me	Ashanti	TONE RAINON
Moonshadow	Mandy Moore	TONE MSHADOW
The Beautiful Occupation	Travis	TONE BOCCUP

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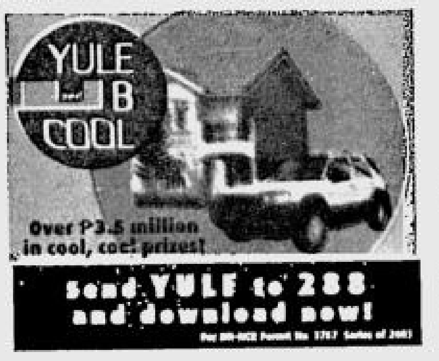
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SMART Simply Amazing!

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PIC HARTMINE PIC KISSDOG
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PIC MEANT
love at 1st sight
PIC LOVFIRST
HOT LIPS!
KISS ME PLEASE
PIC KISSFROG
GIMIKERA
TOMADOR
John Mayer
Foo Fighters
Eraserheads
Stacie Orrico
AHA
Michael Buble
John Mayer
Ashanti
Mandy Moore
Travis
TONE CLARITY
TONE HAVIT
TONE FRUITCAKE
TONE THERESG
TONE HUNTING
TONE 4ONCE
TONE SPLITS
TONE RAINON
TONE MSHADOW
TONE BOCCUP
Splits
Rain
Moonshadow
The Beautiful
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Get the hottest picture message automatically delivered to your cell phone weekly.
Get the hottest ring tone automatically delivered to your cell phone weekly.
Featured tune of the week: Right Thurr by Chingy.
CAL GAL
CAL GUY

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